How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend
8
FINAL
Original Story
FUMIAKI MARUTO
Art
TAKESHI MORIKI
Character Design
KUREHITO MISAKI

How to Raise
a Boring
Girlfriend

contents

Chapter 38 5

Chapter 39 35

Chapter 40 61

Chapter 41 95

Chapter 42 131

TV Anime Adaptation
Second Season Celebration Comic 173

How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

8

Original Story
FUMIAKI MARUTO
Art
TAKESHI MORIKI
Character Design
KUREHITO MISAKI

How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

Volume Eight

Presented by
Fumiaki Maruto &
Takeshi Moriki

Character Design by
Kurehito Misaki

...IT'S STARTING TO SNOW.

CHAPTER
38

Cadia cafe
AND SO, TOMOYA-KUN, THIS IS A BIT LATE...
...BUT HERE'S SOME VALENTINE CHOCOLATE.
WAIT, WAIT, WAIT! HANG ON!
I WISH YOU WOULDN'T PRANK ME LIKE THAT!
...BUT ACTUALLY, IT'S FROM IZUMI. I HID THAT FACT ON PURPOSE, I WILL ADMIT.
NO NEED TO OVERREACT! I MEAN, WE WERE FRIENDS ONCE.

I SEE. SO IZUMI-CHAN IS TRYING TO GET INTO A BIG CITY SCHOOL, HUH...?
TELL HER "GOOD LUCK" FOR ME.

I'LL DO THAT, BUT ISN'T IT A BIT LATE?

WELL, SHE WANTED TO GIVE THEM TO YOU HER-SELF...
...BUT UNFOR-TUNATELY, SHE HAS AN EXAM FOR A TOKYO HIGH SCHOOL.

I SINCERELY APOLOGIZE TO YOUR SISTER!
I'M SORRY! I'M SORRY! FORGIVE ME!
THIS GUY'S ACTUALLY CONSID-ERATE OF HER, HUH?
THAT KIND OF EMPTY ENCOURAGE-MENT NOW WOULD COME ACROSS TO HER AS JUST YOU NOT CARING.
BACK WHEN IZUMI WAS REALLY PUSHING HERSELF, STUDYING LATE EVERY NIGHT, YOU NEVER TEXTED HER OR BOUGHT SNACKS FOR HER.

WELL, YOU COULD SAY I'M VISITING A SOLDIER AT THE FRONT, OR I'M RECONNING ENEMY MOVE-MENTS...

...RIGHT?

HE'S ALWAYS SO DAMN SMUG...!

IRA (IRA)

イラ

SO WHAT'S THE REAL REASON YOU CALLED ME?

THE DEADLINE'S PASSED FOR SUMMER COMIKET...

DID YOU GET YOUR APPLICATION IN?

.....

I SEE. YOUR GAME IS DOING WELL IN THE SHOPS TOO.

YOU SOLD ALL THOSE COPIES AT EVENTS, AND YOU'RE STILL SELLING...

THE FIRST WAVE YOU GAVE TO SHOPS SOLD OUT IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE. THINGS ARE GOING SWIMMINGLY FOR YOU.

SO NATURALLY, THERE ARE HIGH HOPES FOR THE SECOND WAVE AND YOUR NEXT PROJECT.

THOUGH... WE'RE GETTING CRITICIZED FOR HOW WE'RE SELLING IT.

I'M NOT VERY HAPPY ABOUT THAT.

?

WELL, WE'RE ALSO SELLING THROUGH THE SHOPS. WE'RE PLANNING TO SEND OUT TEN THOUSAND IN THE NEXT SHIP-MENT.

THAT'S ROUGE EN ROUGE FOR YOU...

...WELL, ASIDE FROM THAT LAST ONE, YOU'RE WRONG ON ALL COUNTS THERE.

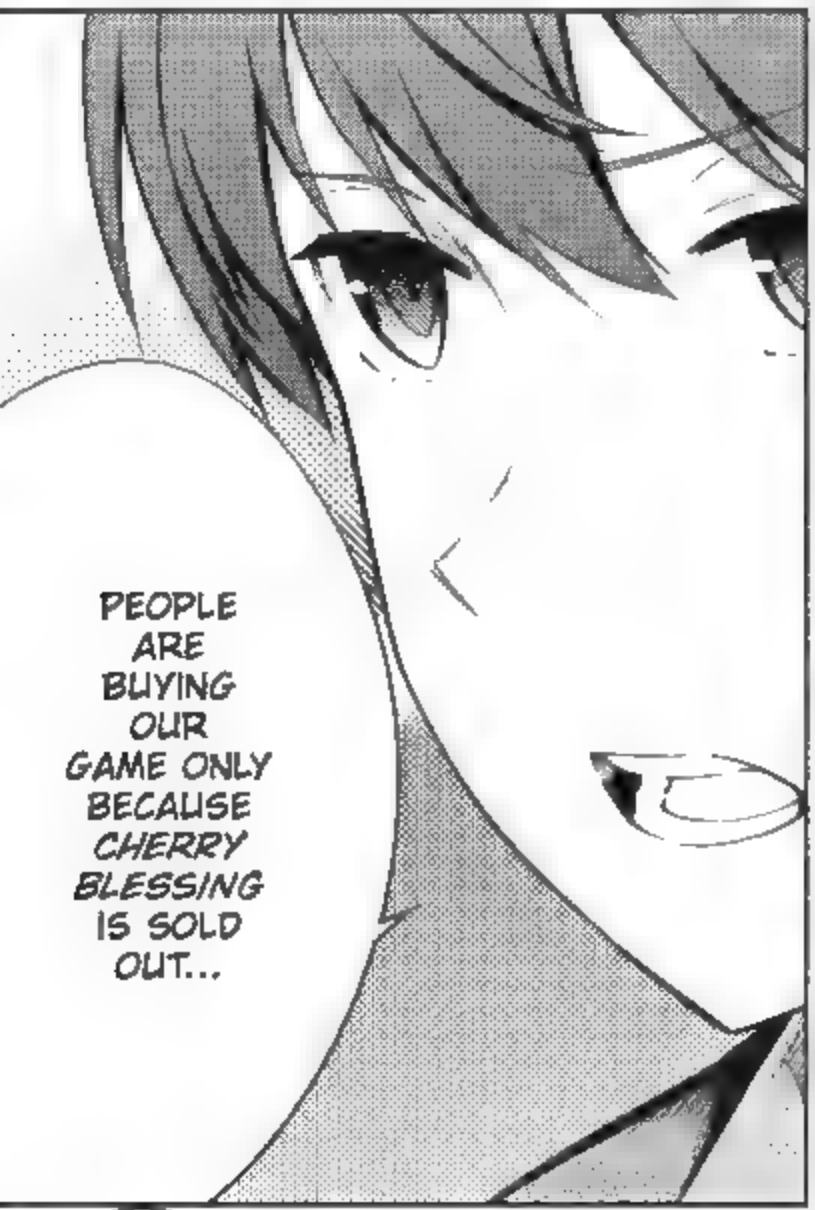
★ DIFFERENT BONUSES FOR EACH AND EVERY DOUJIN SHOP
★ RANDOMLY INSERTED TRADING CARDS
★ OVERLY FORCEFUL NEGOTIATIONS ON CONSIGNMENT NUMBERS AND GETTING INTO ARGUMENTS WITH THE SHOPS

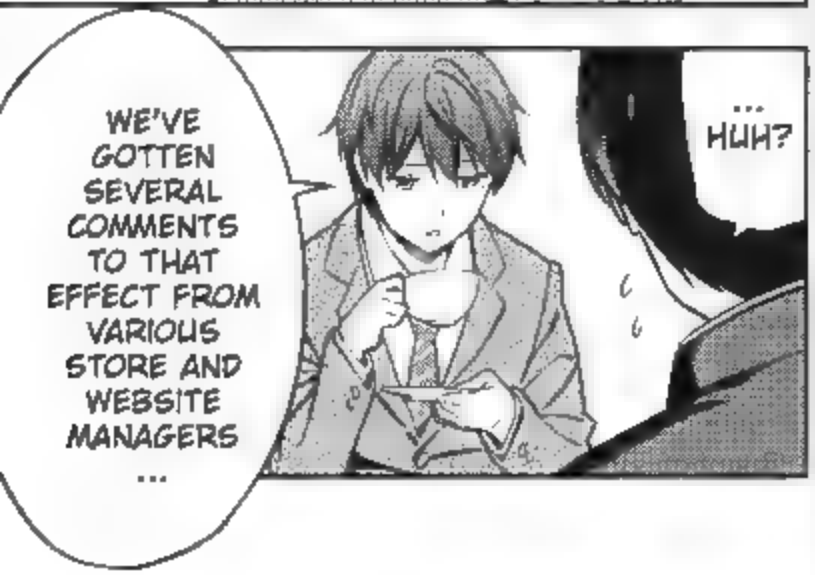
HE DID ARGUE WITH THEM...

SAY WHAT?

DID YOU USE SOME GREEDY SALES TACTICS?

HUH?
HUH!?
WHAT DID WE HAVE TO DO WITH—


PEOPLE ARE BUYING OUR GAME ONLY BECAUSE CHERRY BLESSING IS SOLD OUT...


WE'VE GOTTEN SEVERAL COMMENTS TO THAT EFFECT FROM VARIOUS STORE AND WEBSITE MANAGERS ...
... HUH?

IT'S NOT OUR FAULT THOUGH.
IF ANYTHING ...
...IT'S YOURS.

I HAVE TO THANK YOU FOR OUR GAME CONTINUING TO SELL.

I ALSO HAVE TO BLAME YOU FOR IT.

WE BEAT YOU IN TERMS OF SALES, BUT NOT IN ACCLAIM, IT SEEMS...
ALL OF WHICH MEANS OUR COMPETITION HAS NOT BEEN SETTLED.
I DID HEAR THE FIRST SHIPMENT SOLD OUT IN A FLASH, BUT I HAD MY HANDS FULL, WORRYING ABOUT THE NEW PACKAGE, AND DIDN'T THINK ABOUT IT AT ALL...
WHEN DID IT BECOME THIS...?
NO. THIS IS THE POWER OF ERI KASHIWAGI AND UTAKO KASUMI...!
DID EVERY-THING UP AND CHANGE WITHOUT MY NOTICING?
IORI...
IORI, I...
UH .....
YOU'LL HAVE SOME-THING, WON'T YOU?
THAT'S WHY WE NEED TO RESOLVE THIS AT SUMMER COMIKET, FOR GOOD THIS TIME, WITH NEW PROJECTS ...
... TOMOYA-KUN?
DON'T TELL ME...

WHERE THE HELL DID YOU HEAR THAT!? YOUR INFORMATION NETWORK IS WAY TOO SCARY!

SO THE RUMOR THAT YOU DIDN'T APPLY WAS TRUE?

... TOMOYA-KUN, LISTEN.

WH-WHAT?

I SEE. THAT'S WHY...

YOU NEED TO BEWARE OF AKANE-SAN.

...WELL ...

...THAT'S TRUE, BUT...

SHE RETIRED FROM YOUR CIRCLE, DIDN'T SHE?

...HUH? AKANE-SAN? WHO?

YOU MEAN AKANE KOUSAKA?

AKANE KOUSAKA...

AND NOW, EVEN AS A PRO, SHE CREATES CONTENT FOR ALL SORTS OF MEDIA. THEY SAY THERE ISN'T A TV SEASON THAT GOES BY WHERE YOU DON'T SEE HER NAME. SHE'S A MONSTER IN THE INDUSTRY, AND SHE SELLS TONS TO BOOT.

FOUNDER AND FIRST REPRESENTATIVE OF "ROUGE EN ROUGE"...

AN ASTUTE DOUJIN ARTIST WHO KEPT HER CIRCLE AT THE SWEET SPOT BY THE COMIKET ENTRANCE FOR CLOSE TO TEN YEARS.

HANG ON...SHE'S RAKING IN ALL THAT MONEY, AND YOU'RE TELLING ME SHE'S GOING TO GO BACK TO MAKING DOUJIN?

...A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE THE WRONG IDEA ABOUT HER, BUT AKANE-SAN ISN'T REALLY THAT INTERESTED IN MONEY.

...DON'T TELL ME SHE'S COMING BACK TO YOUR CIRCLE!

WITH THAT WORK-LOAD!?

WELL, IT'S JUST...

I CAN'T GO INTO THE DETAILS, BUT...

WHAT I'M SAYING IS, HER INTEREST IS IN SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY ...

I STILL DON'T GET IT. IS AKANE KOUSAKA ACTUALLY A WEIRDO?

.....

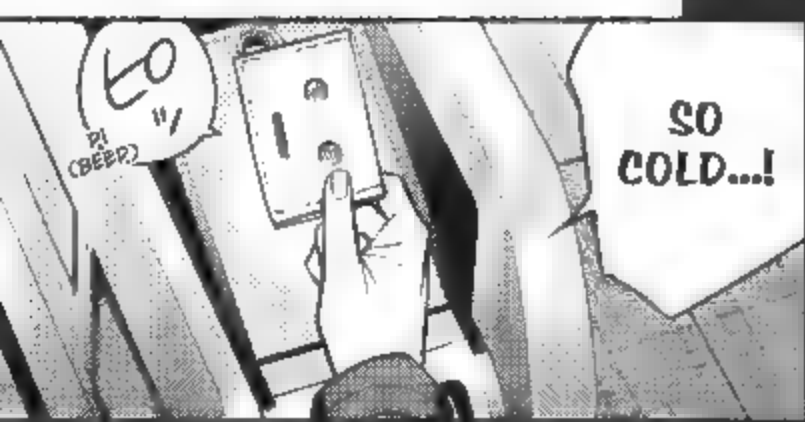
ENOUGH WITH THE RIDDLES. WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?

WHY WOULD HE WARN ME LIKE THIS...?

I'M SORRY. THAT'S ALL I CAN SAY, TOMOYA-KUN.

AS FOR THE REST, JUST DO YOUR BEST AND PULL THROUGH SOMEHOW.

I'M REALLY SORRY I CAN'T BE ANY CLEARER ABOUT IT.



"SEE YA"...

...HUH...?

OKAY, THEN, TOMOYA-KUN. I'M OFF THIS WAY.

SURE... SEE YA.

NO. IT'S JUST THE FIRST TIME YOU DIDN'T SAY TO ME, "DON'T EVER SHOW YOUR FACE TO ME AGAIN."

WHAT? DID I SAY SOMETHING WEIRD?

A BULLY NEVER REMEMBERS HIS BULLYING.

LATER.

I'VE NEVER SAID ANYTHING THAT CRUEL TO YOU!

IT MIGHT BE LATE TO THINK IT, BUT...HE'S NOT REALLY A BAD GUY.

ACTUALLY, I'M DEEPLY INDEBTED TO HIM FOR THE FAVORS HE DID ME AT THE END OF THE YEAR— ONES I CAN NEVER REPAY.

HE JUST LIVES DIFFER-ENTLY THAN I DO...

...BUT SOME-TIMES, HE'S JUST SO NATURALLY INFURIATING.

HEY, TOMOYA-KUN.

EVEN IF YOU DON'T DO SUMMER COMIKET, YOU'LL KEEP IT GOING, RIGHT?

HM?

YOUR CIRCLE, I MEAN.

I'M SERIOUS. I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.

MAKE SURE YOU HANG ON TO IT, OKAY?

?

YOU DON'T NEED TO TELL ME THAT...

DESPITE WHAT HE SAYS...

...IT'S LIKE HE'S SAYING FAREWELL...

...HOW DID YOU KNOW?

THAT UNEQUIVOCAL HAPPY ENDING ON THE LAST ROUTE...THAT WASN'T UTAKO KASUMI'S WORK, WAS IT?

BY THE WAY, I PLAYED YOUR GAME.

MAAAN, YOUR STYLE HASN'T CHANGED ONE BIT!

HA HA HA HA HA HA!

BECAUSE I READ THE *LITRHAP 2* FANFICTION SERIES YOU USED TO SEND TO IZUMI!

SHIN (HUGH)

NEVER SPEAK OF THAT TIME AGAIN!!!

STOP, STOP, STOP, STOP, STOP! GAAAH!!!

SIGN: CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS ONLY

CRAP! AND I WAS ALMOST HOME!

GOTTA TAKE COVER...

...FROM THE RAIN— I MEAN SNOW!

ARGH! IT JUST TURNED RED...

WHOA!

K—

KATOU!

.....

IS SHE... ALONE ?

KATOU... IT'S BEEN TWO MONTHS SINCE SHE STOPPED COMING TO CIRCLE MEETINGS ...
HAS SHE JUST LOST ALL INTEREST ...?
IN US? IN OTAKU? IN MAKING GAMES?

BUT IT'S BEEN TWO MONTHS.
THAT'S PLENTY OF TIME TO END YOUR FRIENDSHIPS AND BUILD NEW ONES...
...IN WHICH CASE...

SHOULD I TRY TO TALK TO HER OR LEAVE HER BE?

I CAN'T DECIDE...

DOON (BAM)

SHE'S TOTALLY FLAT EVEN NOW... SHE'S TRULY A STATIONARY BACK-GROUND EXTRA!

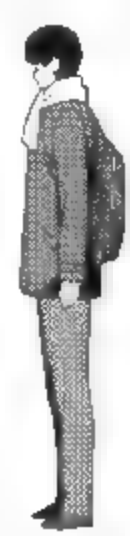
BUT... SHE'S A DIFFICULT PERSON TO JUDGE ON THOSE FRONTS.

IS IT SOMETHING AT LEAST A LITTLE SIMILAR TO WHAT'S BEEN LEFT INSIDE OF ME?

HAS OUR RELATIONSHIP PLANTED ANYTHING WITHIN KATOU?

MORE THAN SIX MONTHS, LESS THAN A YEAR...

MORE THAN FRIENDS, LESS THAN FELLOW OTAKU...



HEY...
IS THERE STILL ANY ROOM FOR ME TO BE ABLE TO PATCH THINGS UP...?
SEND
PLEASE TELL ME... KATOU!

Hey, it's been a while.
This is out of the blue, but
about the next circle meeting...
I'd like to decide on our
structure starting in the new
school term, the next project, and
other stuff too. First, I'd like to
roughly hash out the direction of
things with you, Katou, so it'll
just be us for now.
Date: Feb 2X (Fri)
Place: AV Room
If you can't make it, please let
me know.
HOW CAN YOU JUST ACT LIKE YOU ALWAYS DO?
WHY ARE YOU ALONE?

I DON'T UNDER-STAND IT, BUT...
...THAT'S EXACTLY WHY I WANT TO KNOW.

THAT NIGHT, I DIDN'T SLEEP FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A WHILE...

...BECAUSE I PLAYED OUR GAME THROUGH 100%.

KACHI

KACHI (CLICK)

I ASKED HYOUDOU-SAN TO TEST PLAY THE GAME FOR US.

KACHI

TAKE THIS!

KACHI

FUAAA CYAWNO

あああ

KACHI

I ONLY STITCHED TOGETHER THE ART AND THE TEXT.

KACHI

BUT THIS MIGHT ALL HAVE BEEN POINTLESS.

KACHI

AND DID YOU PLAY IT THROUGH TO THE END?

SO THERE'S STILL QUITE A BIT OF WORK LEFT TO BE DONE.

IT TOOK ME UNTIL YESTERDAY.

I HOPE WE'RE IN TIME FOR WINTER COMIKET.

KACHI

I SAID I CAN DO IT.

THE SCRIPTING.

I THINK MEGURI'S EMOTIONS ARE A BIT DIFFERENT IN THIS SCENE.

WE'LL ALL MAKE IT TOGETHER, AKI-KUN... THIS AWESOME GAME THAT YOU THOUGHT UP.

SEE YOU LATER!

KACHI (CLICK)

C'MON!

KACHI

LET'S MAKE OUR STORY NOW.

KACHI

COULD YOU GET A BIT ANGRIER MAYBE?

S-SORRY. HOW ABOUT THIS?

WHY DIDN'T I SEE IT BEFORE ...?
GYUU (SQUEEZE)
I'M SORRY ...
I'M SO SORRY, KATOU ...

THAT THE GAME'S FOUNDATION SUPPORTS THE ART-WORK AND SCENARIOS SO WELL...

THAT SHE WASN'T JUST A MODEL FOR THE HEROINE...

THAT NO ONE COM-PLAINED ABOUT THE GAME SYSTEM ...

THAT KATOU WAS IN EVERY ASPECT OF THE GAME...

I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW HARD YOU'D WORKED.

I'M SORRY ...

I'M SORRY... KATOU...

END

BASA
(PWAP)

SACHA (KAZUMA)
カリ
チャ

CHAPTER
39

OH! ERIRI!
S-SORRY.
...YOU'RE ONE TO TALK, LOOKING LIKE THAT.
SO YOU LEFT HOME EARLIER TODAY?
WHAT'S WRONG? YOU LOOK TIRED.

I-I SEE...

!

I DIDN'T SLEEP, BUT I'M NOT SLEEPY.

SFX: HISO (WHISPER) HISO

Sawa-mura-san's talking to that otaku again!

Look!

LISTEN, TOMOYA... ABOUT THE ART FOR THE NEW PACKAGING...

Promise !?

Of what !?

BUT I BROKE MY PROMISE TO YOU, TOMOYA...

WHAT? IS THAT STILL BUGGING YOU?

What are they talking about!?

He said he'd wait for her!

I CAN WAIT AS LONG AS IT TAKES.

IF YOU'RE WORRIED, YOU CAN JUST DRAW IT WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE IT.

BUT WON'T WE PASS THE SALES WINDOW?

OUR CIRCLE DESIRES A LEGEND...

...NOT MONEY.

TO-MOYA ...

I'M NOT BOTHERED AT ALL.

SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!

ZAWA CHURNURO
さわ

HEY, TO-MOYA ...

ZAWA
さわ

HM?

ZAWA
さわ

DO I NEED TO BE A CREATOR FOREVER?

TEARING MY HAIR OUT, PUKING BLOOD, AND WASTING MY LIFE AWAY...

DO I HAVE TO DO ALL THAT TO KEEP CREATING?

...BUT...
(SQUEEZE)
...IF I CONTINUE AS A CREATOR ANY LONGER...
...I COULD END UP...
ERIRI...
DO YOU DREAD DRAWING THAT MUCH?
IS BEING A CREATOR THAT GRUELING?
NO, THAT'S NOT IT...
HEY, TOMOYA...
...WHAT SHOULD I DO?

ドサッ!!

DOZAWA CHUJIRAUTO

I...

.....!

...LOVE YOUR DRAWINGS.

.....

Aki! That bastard!

Totally! I heard him!

Did he just say "love"?

...OF ERIRI— I MEAN ERI KASHIWAGI.

BUT TO BE HONEST, I HOPE TO CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THE WORK...

I'VE ONLY BEEN A "TRUE BELIEVER" FOR TWO MONTHS NOW, SO YOU CAN'T SAY I'M YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER ...

THIS ISN'T SIMPLY "HIGH PRAISE."

THAT ART SHE CREATED IN NASU WAS THE MOST SHOCKINGLY INCREDIBLE WORK I'VE SEEN IN MY ENTIRE LIFE.

BUT, I'M SORRY...

I CAN'T SAY, "YOU MUST DRAW."

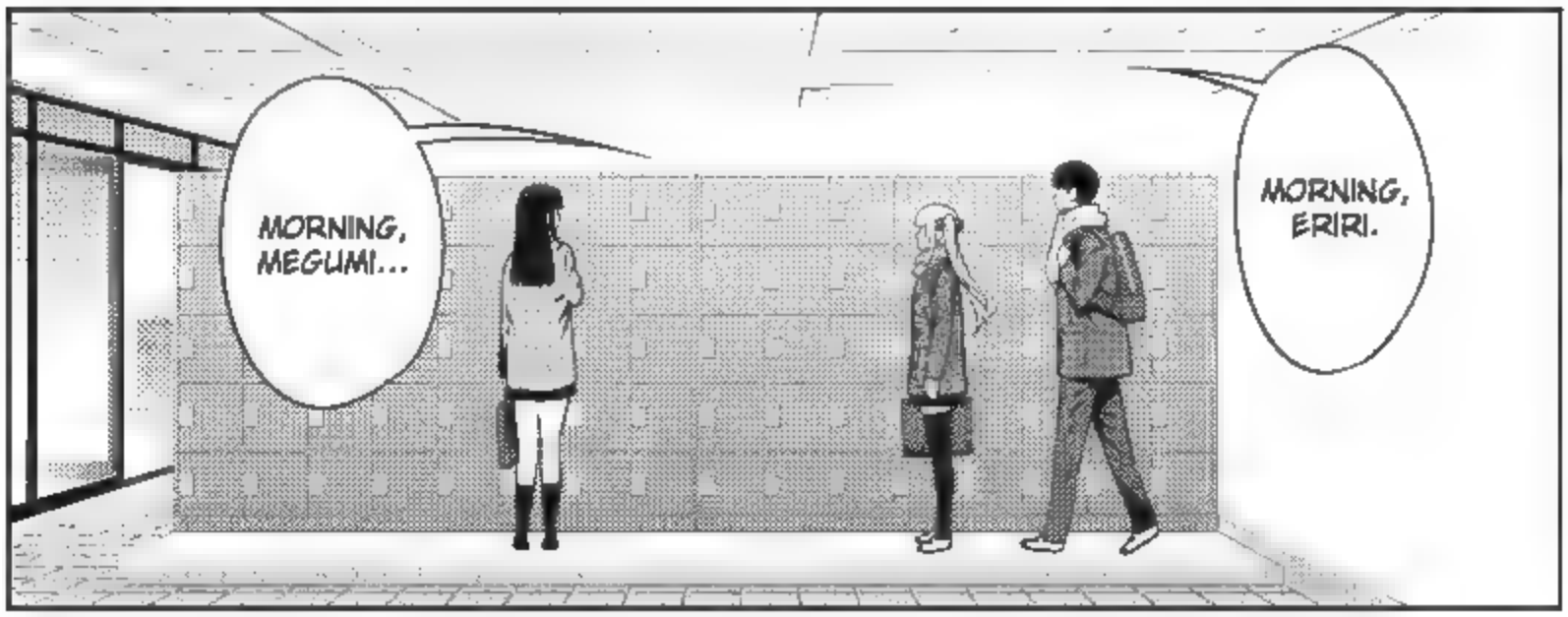
TOMO-YA...

SO I'M SORRY... IT MAY BE IRRESPONSIBLE OF ME, BUT I WANT YOU TO MAKE THE FINAL DECISION.

THOUGH, EVEN IF YOU DECIDE TO GIVE UP ART, I HOPE YOU WON'T END UP HATING OTAKU.

AKI!!!!!!!
HUUUUUH!?
I COULD NEVER... HATE YOU.

THE FIRST BELL'S ABOUT TO—
OH!
YOU CAN ALL THIN OUT TOO.
LOOK, WE'D BETTER GET TO CLEASS.
M—
MEGU-MI...


MORNING, MEGUMI...
MORNING, ERIRI.

GOOD MORNING, KATOU.

YOU SAW THE MESSAGE I SENT YOU?
OH. UH. WELL...

Y-YEAH ...
MORNING TO YOU TOO, AKI-KUN.

WORDS ARE NO LONGER NEEDED.

ZA (SHUFF)

YEAH, SURE... SEE YOU, TOMOYA.

WELL, THEN...

...SEE YOU LATER TOO, ERIRI.

AND TO MAKE KATOU COME BACK TO OTAKU-DOM...

...I HAVE TO DO MY BEST.

KATA
カタ
KATA
カタ
KATA
カタ

File Edit Format View Help

KATA (TAK)

Doujin Game Project Proposal (first draft) -Tomoya Aki

A CONTIN-UATION OF A DREAM WHICH ONCE HAD FORM...

THIS IS WHERE I BELIEVE MY FUTURE LIES.

I HAVE A REGRET.

Title: "blessing software" 2nd project (working title)

TAN (TAP)

KATA

KATA

KATA

...SO I WANT TO ATONE.

KATA

KATA

■ Genre: TBD

I WAS HOLDING EVERYBODY BACK...

KATATA

I WANT TO HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE.

■ Staff (proposed):

Planning: Tomoya Aki
Scenario: Utako Kasumi (main route)
Tomoya Aki (all sub-routes)
Artwork: Eri Kashiwagi (main heroine)
New member (TBD) (all sub-heroines)
Music: Micchi

KATA

KATA

Directors: Tomoya Aki
Megumi Katou

...I'LL HAVE TO WORK MY HARDEST.

TO PUT A SMILE ON EVERY-ONE'S FACE, IF NOT MY OWN...

WE'LL ALL BE THERE SMILING...

AND THEN, WE'LL SET OUR SIGHTS ON THAT FESTIVAL ONCE AGAIN.

...THIS TIME FOR SURE!

KATA

■Planned Distribution: Next Winter Comiket

KATATATA

SINCE IT IS OUR SECOND PROJECT, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO THIS.

KATA

KATA

KATA

DON'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE AGAIN.

KATA (TAK)

DON'T SLOW THOSE HANDS.

KATA

NO— I HAVE TO DO THIS.

KATATATA

KATA

TATATA

KATA

TATA

KATATA

KEYA

TATATA
KATA (TAK)
KATA
KATA
THAT'S WHY I WANT TO KEEP GOING, RIGHT TO THE VERY END.
I'VE LEARNED ABOUT THE PLEASURE AND PAIN, THE HEAVEN AND HELL, OF BEING A CREATOR— WHAT CONSUMER OTAKU DON'T UNDERSTAND.
I DON'T WANT TO STOP BEING AN OTAKU.

Doujin Game Project Proposal

File Edit Format View Help

Main Heroine: Meguri Kanou
Points to be discussed regarding
s relationship with our previous ga
berry blessing.
could be a spin-off that uses the s
racter, or even a different charac
same visual look (with her essen stics
same), or even an entirely different character
a new name.
meet dramatically and...she doesn't stand out at all.
ther she is a girl with no sense of presence at all.

I'M GETTING IDEAS ONE AFTER THE OTHER.

SOMETHING'S WEIRD ABOUT ME TODAY.....

I'M COMING UP WITH A STRUCTURE OF EVENTS THAT WILL ATTRACTIVELY PORTRAY THE HEROINE'S CHARM FROM BEGINNING TO END.

I'M CONFIDENT I CAN MAKE THE PLAYERS LOVE HER.

BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE— I COULD FALL IN LOVE WITH THIS GIRL RIGHT NOW.

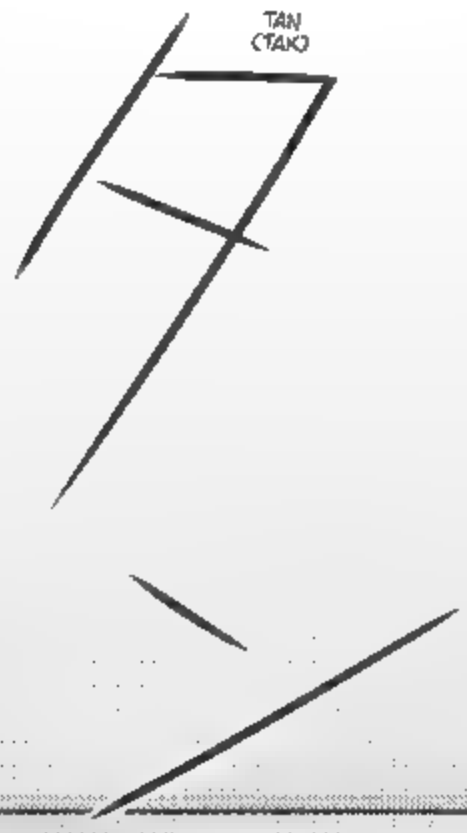
...WELL, IT'S ALL BASED ON REAL EVENTS, SO IT'S NOT REALLY A BIG DEAL.

KATA KATATA KATATATATA

Doujin Gamm Project Proposal

File Edit Format View Help

■ Title: *How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend* (Not Final)



END

OKAY, EVERY-ONE. SEE YOU NEXT WEEK.

TAKE CARE.

AND BOW.

PON (PAT)

KATOU ...

...WE HAVE OUR CIRCLE MEETING TODAY.

CHAPTER
40

UH, TODAY, I'M A BIT...

COME ON. LET'S GO TO THE AV ROOM.
I TEXTED YOU ON TUESDAY.

.....
I DID WRITE, "IF YOU CAN'T MAKE IT, PLEASE LET ME KNOW," BUT YOU NEVER REPLIED.

AKI-KUN...
THIS WILL BE THE FIRST CIRCLE ACTIVITY OF THE YEAR FOR YOU AND ME.
WE'RE VERY LATE ALREADY ...

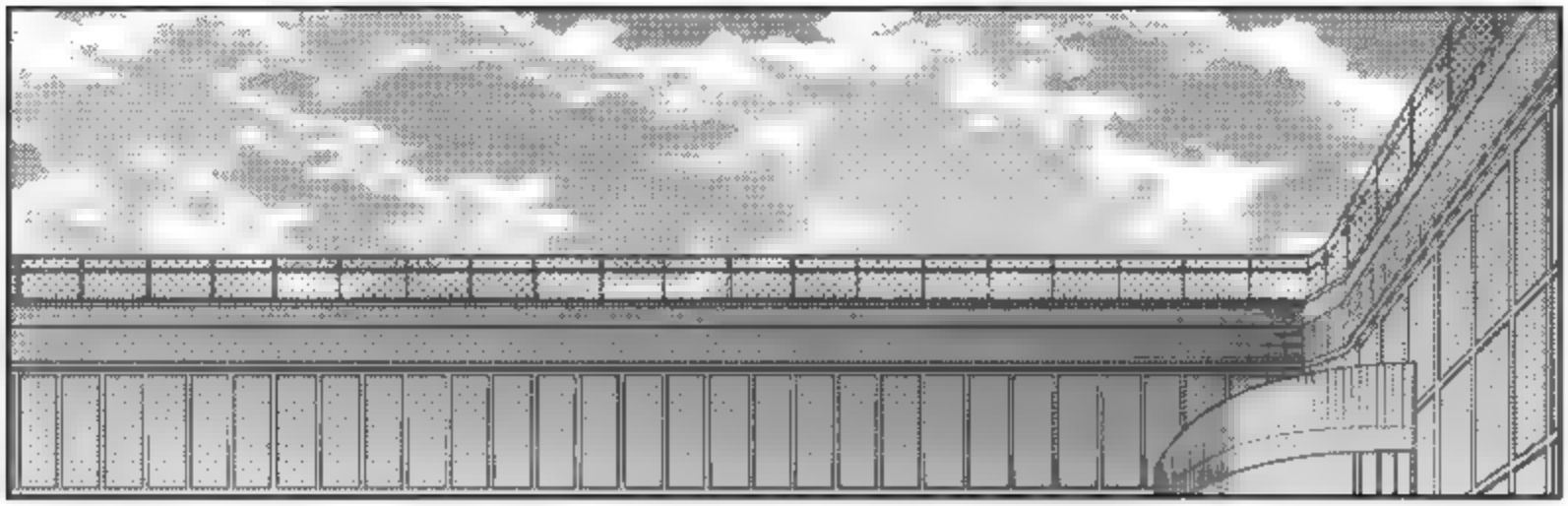
...AND SHE WAS STEALING GLANCES AT ME.

...SHE WAS LEAVING SCHOOL LATER THAN USUAL ...

AFTER ALL...

WELL, I AM AWARE I'VE SORT OF STRONG-ARMED HER, BUT...

...I FELT LIKE SHE MIGHT HEAR ME OUT.



SIGN: BROADCASTING ROOM

NOW, THEN...

KATOU ...

GACHA (KACHAK)

HAVE A SEAT THERE.

O- OKAY.....

A...

AKI-KUN...?

OH!
SORRY! DIDN'T NEED TO LOCK THAT.
BUT SHE WAS REALLY MOE JUST NOW.

NOW, I DO HAVE A GOOD REASON FOR WHY I DRAGGED— I MEAN, CALLED YOU HERE.
I GOT INTO PREPARING SOME MATERIAL...
IF I PRINTED IT OUT, IT WOULD USE UP A LOT OF PAPER, SO I'LL SHOW IT TO YOU ON-SCREEN, OKAY?

Doujin Game Project Proposal (First Draft)
Tomoya Aki

AKI-KUN...?
WHAT —

FIRST, THE TABLE OF CONTENTS —
LET'S GET STARTED.

...BY EXPRESSING THE HEROINE'S AMBIGUOUS ATTITUDE, HER WAVERING FEELINGS, AND OTHER LIVELY QUALITIES, SHE BECOMES MORE CHARMING...

—IN OTHER WORDS ...

■ Themes: Love, Friendship, Growth

...THE ESSENCE OF THIS PROJECT IS THE CREATION OF A 2-D HEROINE THAT YOU CAN SERIOUSLY FALL IN LOVE WITH!

OH... I SEE...

AKI-KUN... SAYING "DARING" AND "CHALLENGING" IS REDUNDANT.

A-AH, YEAH...

BUT THEN, HEAD SCENARIO WRITER UTAKO KASUMI'S SPIRIT OF DARING AND CHALLENGE GOT INTO THE MIX, AND...

...AND TO TURN YOU INTO A MAIN HEROINE THAT COULD MAKE PLAYERS' HEARTS THROB, KATOU!

ORIGINALLY, MY OBJECTIVE WITH THE FIRST GAME WAS TO PROJECT THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE HEROINE THROUGHOUT, WHATEVER IT TOOK...

AND THEN, ERI KASHIWAGI'S ART GOT INFLUENCED BY UTAKO KASUMI'S STYLE TOO.

BUT THAT WASN'T THE HEART OF MY PROPOSAL. I SHOULDN'T BE PROUD BECAUSE MY CREATION LACKED THAT.

UTAKO KASUMI'S SELF-CHALLENGING ESSENCE ADDED FANTASTIC ELEMENTS TO THE STORY LINE. THAT ACTUALLY MADE THE WORK A SMASHING SUCCESS.

THAT'S... AMAZING, IN MORE THAN ONE SENSE.

WHEN I PLAY *CHERRY BLESSING*, IT'S TOTALLY A TEAR-JERKER.

AND... I WAS PULLED IN BY BOTH OF THEM MYSELF.

YES —

BUT, LIKE, I REALIZED I WASN'T THE ONE MAKING PLAYERS CRY!

THAT'S WHY, FOR THE NEXT PROJECT... WE'LL GO BACK TO BLESSING SOFTWARE'S POINT OF ORIGIN!

...ERR, SO I'LL BE THE HEROINE AGAIN?

NATU-RALLY! YOU ARE MY MAIN HEROINE, KATOU...

...ONLY YOU!

I-I SEE.

WE'LL GRAB THE PLAYERS WITH YOUR TRUE CHARM, KATOU!

UH... HUH.

LOOK, THIS IS IMPORTANT. AFTER ALL, I LOVE STORIES ABOUT GIRLS I LOVE!

Y-YOU WANT MY OPINION ...?

BUT, I WANT TO TRY SOME-THING MORE BASED IN ADVENTURE. I'M THINKING MAYBE THAT WILL REALLY GIVE IT THE TOMOYA AKI FLAVOR. WHAT DO YOU THINK, KATOU?

TO BEGIN WITH, THESE GAMES ARE OFTEN LESS ABOUT THE GAME SYSTEM, RIGHT?

...IS THE WORST POSSIBLE FUTUR
WHERE WE'RE CRITICIZED MORE TH
WE NEED TO BE. THEY'LL SAY, "SIN
THEIR FIRST PROJECT SOLD WELL
MISTAKE, THEY OVERESTIMATED THE
SELVES." THEY'LL SAY, "THIS IS TH
YPICAL PATTERN WHEN PEOPLE CA
SCERN WHERE THEY REALLY STAN
D "I RECOMMEND YOU AVOID BLES
G SOFTWARE IN THE FUTURE." AN
HEN, "WELL, LET'S AT LEAST SE
D MADE IT." AND, "NEITHER UTAH
MI NOR ERI KASHIWAGI ARE B
THEY?" "WELL, THEN, AVOID
ROJECT PLANNER...TOMOYA
D YET, I...I STILL FEEL
NEED TO DO THIS.

UM, THAT'S ENOUGH.

WELL, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT, BUT THAT DIFFICULTY IS EXACTLY WHY IT'S WORTH DOING. IT MAY URN OUT TO BE LESS POLISHED THAN *ERRY BLESSING*...BUT IF IT'S DOUJI E CAN DO IT. NO—IT'S ONLY IN DOUJI HAT WE CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN. MAYBE E'LL SELL LESS...NO, AT FIRST, IT'LL LL WELL BASED ON THE REPUTATION OF OUR FIRST GAME. BUT THE NTENT MAY NOT LIVE UP TO OUR REP, AND WHAT COULD BE WAITING FOR US...

THIS TIME, KASUMIGAOKA-SENPAI AND ERIRI WON'T BE THE ONLY ONES RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR AREAS, RIGHT?

GO BACK A BIT.

■ Staff (proposed):

Planning:	Tomoya Aki
Scenario:	Utako Kasumi (main route)
	Tomoya Aki (all sub-routes)
Artwork:	Eri Kashiwagi (main heroine)
	New member (TBD) (all sub-heroines)

WELL... SHE'S NOT PRODUCING MUCH WORK AT THE MOMENT, AND THIS NEW STRUCTURE SHOULD COVER FOR ALL THAT.

AND ERIRI...

...THAT'S BECAUSE UTAHA-SENPAI WILL BE BUSY WITH COLLEGE AND HER NEW LIGHT NOVELS.

ABOUT THE STAFF...

IN TERMS OF WORKLOAD AND ABILITY, MY ONLY OPTION IS TO TRY TO BE POSITIVE!

YOU DOING ALL THE OTHER PARTS, AKI-KUN...IS THAT EVEN POSSIBLE?

...I-I'LL DO MY BEST.

AND DO YOU THINK YOU CAN FIND SOMEONE AS GOOD AS ERIRI?

...AC-TUALLY, I'M NOT VERY CONFI-DENT.

...ARE YOU SURE YOU'LL BE OKAY?

BUT ONLY YOUR NAME'S THERE FOR THE REST OF IT, AKI-KUN...

...BUT NATURALLY, WE CAN EXPECT IT TO BE UTAKO KASUMI'S GREATEST MASTER-PIECE!

SO YOU SEE, I'LL REQUEST ONLY THE MAIN HEROINE STUFF FROM UTAHA-SENPAI...

YEAH. I'LL BE IN CHARGE OF ALL THE SHARED ROUTES AND OTHER HEROINE ROUTES!

BUT THAT'S EXACTLY WHY YOUR ROLE IS SO IMPORTANT.

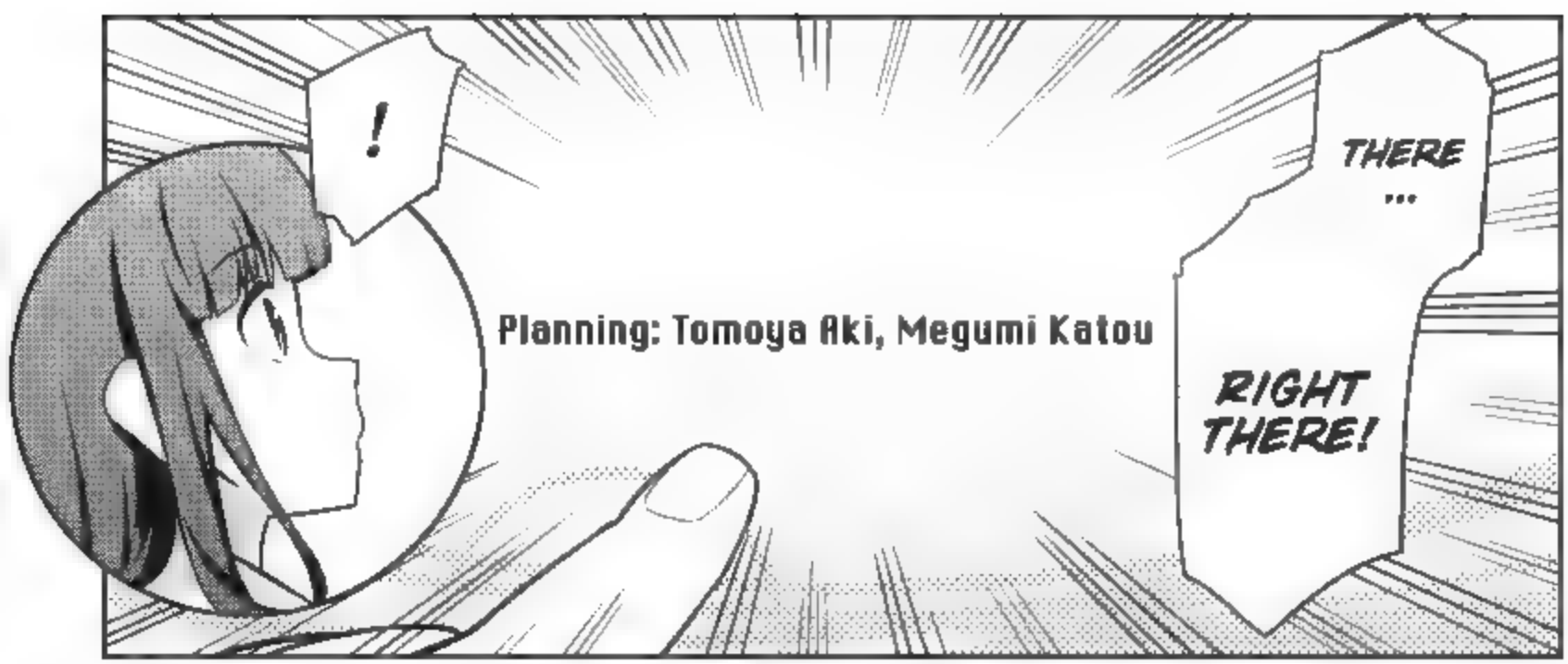
HUH?

PAN (WHAP)

PAN

BUT I'M THE BIGGEST BOTTLE-NECK OF ALL!

NOT JUST AS A SCENARIO WRITER, BUT AS THE DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER!


!
Planning: Tomoya Aki, Megumi Katou
THERE ...
RIGHT THERE!

ISN'T IT TOTALLY CRINGEWORTHY FOR ME TO BE THE MODEL FOR THE HEROINE IN A GAME I MYSELF AM PRODUCING?
...ARE YOU CRAZY ?
I'M BEING SERIOUS, OF COURSE!
HELP ME OUT, KATOU!
SO WE NEED TO REWORK THE HECK OUT OF THIS PROPOS-AL!

YOU CAN START FULL-ON FIGHTS WITH ME AND EVERYONE ELSE ABOUT CIRCLE STUFF!
IF YOU AREN'T HAPPY ABOUT ANY OF THE GAME CONTENT, YOU CAN MAKE US FIX THAT!
YOU CAN SLAP THE CREATORS AROUND!
GIVE MORE INPUT FOR THE CIRCLE! I'LL TAKE FINAL RESPON-SIBILITY!
BUT THAT'S...

I WANT YOU TO SHOULDER THIS CIRCLE ALONG WITH ME.

PLEASE, KATOU... MEGUMI...

...ONE MORE TIME, JUST ONE MORE TIME...

...BECOME MY MAIN HEROINE!

SHUUUUN
CHUSSHD
...CAN I...
...CONFIRM ONE THING?
ANY-THING...

IS THAT... REALLY OKAY?

IS IT OKAY TO DECIDE TO KEEP IT FROM ERIRI?

.....

DID YOU TELL ERIRI... THAT YOU WANT TO MAKE ME A MAIN HEROINE AGAIN?

?

NO, NOT YET.

...?

WHAT I'M ABOUT TO ASK YOU MAY BE INCREDIBLY RUDE, CRINGEY, AND STUPID...

...SO LET ME APOLOGIZE IN ADVANCE. I'M SORRY.

UM...

UH, KATOU .....

I ASK THIS KNOWING IT'S RIDIC-ULOUS...
FUUU (HOO)
...BUT, KATOU, THE REASON YOU'VE BEEN ANGRY WITH ME THESE PAST TWO MONTHS IS NOT BECAUSE YOU'VE HAD VARIOUS FEELINGS ABOUT MY RECENT CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH ERIRI, IS IT?
AND WHEN YOU SAW THE TWO OF US WALKING SIDE BY SIDE, IT DIDN'T MAKE YOU CLENCH YOUR FISTS AND DIG YOUR NAILS INTO YOUR PALMS, RIGHT?

...
AH, FLAT KATOU ...
THERE'S NO MISTAKE... SHE DOESN'T HAVE THE SLIGHTEST ROMANTIC FEELINGS FOR ME.

DON'T TELL ME YOU THOUGHT THAT?
AFTER ALL YOU'VE SEEN ME DO, THAT'S WHAT YOU SUSPECT?

BUT, LOOK! THAT KIND OF THING HAPPENS IN UTAKO KASUMI'S BOOKS ALL THE TIME!
SOMEONE HAS AN ICY ATTITUDE, BUT THEN, LIKE, YOU KNOW...! I'VE REALLY BEEN AGONIZING OVER IT, AND I NEEDED TO KNOW FOR SURE!
HA HA...
IN THAT SENSE, KASUMI-GAOKA-SENPAI IS QUITE THE INNOCENT GIRL AT HEART— PAINFULLY SO.

AKI-KUN, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

NOW COMES THE REAL CHALLENGE ...!

I'VE SUCCESS-FULLY CLEARED ONE CONCERN OF MINE.

...I'M SORRY.

ONCE AGAIN...

LAST YEAR ...?

RIGHT NOW, I'M APOLOGIZING FOR LAST YEAR.

NO.

...WOULDN'T YOU RATHER ERASE THIS CONVERSA-TION FROM MEMORY, ON BOTH SIDES?

UH, IT DOESN'T HELP IF YOU BRING IT UP YET AGAIN. OR, LIKE...

I'D LIKE TO APOLOGIZE FOR THE REAL REASON...

...YOU'VE BEEN ANGRY AT ME UNTIL NOW.

AH...

I MADE THE WRONG DECISION, FOR YOU AND ERIR! BOTH. I'M SORRY.
AND...I'M SORRY I WAS THIS LATE IN APOLOGIZING.
AND THANK YOU...
YOU TRULY...

...LOVED "BLESSING SOFTWARE"!
THANK YOU, KATOU...
BA (WHAP)

WHAT COULD YOU BE TALKING ABOUT ...!?

WHAT, WHAT, WHAT ...?

And Eriri too, and Kasumigaoka-senpai, and Hyoudou-san...

We're allies, aren't we? We're friends, aren't we?

KACHI (CLICK)

ON

BIRI

If we're friends... we shouldn't keep secrets, hide things, and make decisions without talking to one another, right?

THOSE ARE SOCIETY'S RULES...

That doesn't make any difference. It's the way things are in any group.

BIIIIIIII (WWVVEEEEEE)

It was strangely more fun than hanging out with my usual friends...

KIIIIIIII (SKZEEEEEEEEE)

The circle was fun... more than I expected it would be.

It was really fun.

ALSO—!

DOKA (WHAMP)

I'M SORRY. I'M SORRY.

DII (EEEE)

...UNTIL YOU MADE WAVES, AKI-KUN...

...SEE?

...SHE'S LIKE A HORRIBLE DRUNK...

WHEN KATOU'S NOT FLAT...

...LIKE SOME SORT OF ANNOYING GIRLFRIEND.

W-WELL, I DO EXPECT THERE TO BE HURDLES IN THE BEGINNING, BUT...

SO LET ME ASK YOU AGAIN. DO YOU TRULY BELIEVE WE CAN PULL OFF THIS NEW SETUP, AKI-KUN?

...BUT I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D GO SO FAR AS TO EVEN USE IT IN A TITLE!

I'VE HAD TO KEEP LISTENING TO YOU CALL ME A BORING HEROINE ...

WHAT'S THIS "BORING GIRLFRIEND" BUSINESS?

Title: How to Raise a Boring

I-I-IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, I'LL CHANGE IT!

...AND SO ATTRACTIVE. AM I HOPELESS FOR FEELING THIS WAY?

THIS SIDE OF KATOU RIGHT NOW IS SO INCREDIBLY NEW AND RARE...

...ISN'T THAT BEING TOO RECKLESS?

I'M SORRY, I'M SORRY, I'M SORRY!

HOKA

HOKA (PUFF)

HOKA

A NEWBIE LIKE ME CAN'T BE DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE OF AN OTAKU CIRCLE...!

— AND SO...

ESPECIALY NOT IN ONE WHERE EVERY MEMBER IS SO AMAZING.

...SHE'S STILL LOOKING FOR FLAWS!

AND IN MY HOUSE!

NO, AS FAR I KNOW, YOU WIELD THE MOST POWER BEHIND THE SCENES. AS I SEE IT, NO ONE WOULD DISOBEY YOU.

OKAY.

!?

NO! I MEAN, WE'D BETTER BE LEAV—

NO, THAT'S MY FAULT.

HAAH...

SHALL WE CONTINUE THIS TALK IN MY ROOM?

I MAY HAVE TOLD HER ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED IN TOO MUCH DETAIL...

THOSE IMPRES-SIONS MAKE ME WANT TO DIE, SO PLEASE STOP!

SHE USES MY BATH LIKE IT'S THE MOST NORMAL THING...

AKI-KUN, YOU LIKE ERIRI AFTER ALL, DON'T YOU?

I LIKE YOU TOO, KATOU...

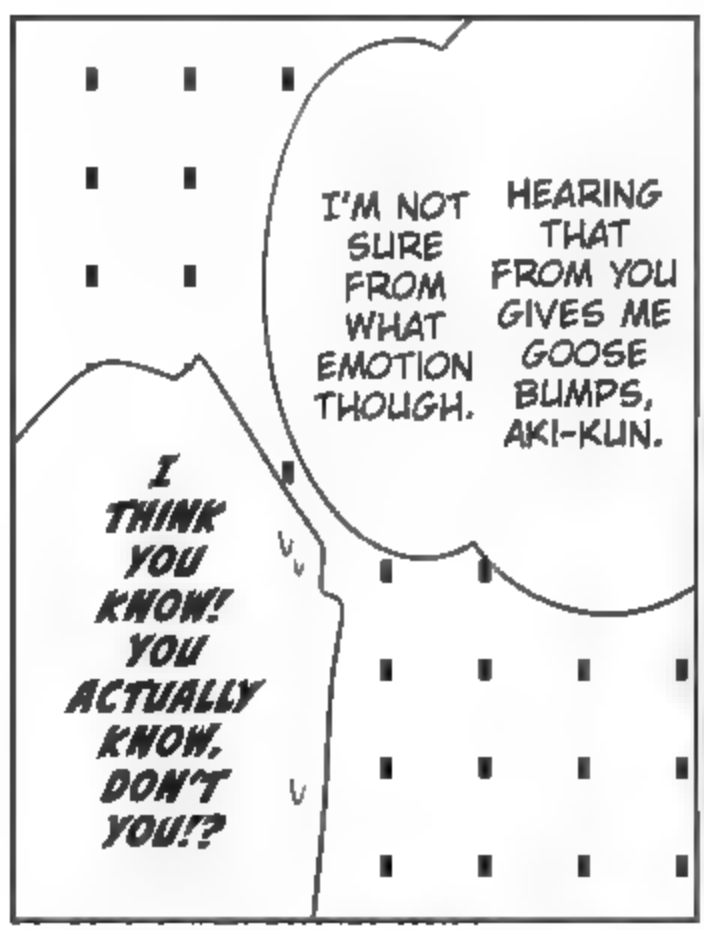
...AND AS OF TODAY, I LIKE YOU EVEN MORE!

UH-HUH. I KNOW WHAT I SAID MADE YOU BLUSH, BUT NO NEED TO RESPOND THAT WAY.

U-URK...!

STILL...

...ERIRI SAYS SUCH CUTE THINGS TO YOU, AKI-KUN.


I'M NOT SURE FROM WHAT EMOTION THOUGH.
HEARING THAT FROM YOU GIVES ME GOOSE BUMPS, AKI-KUN.
I THINK YOU KNOW! YOU ACTUALLY KNOW, DON'T YOU!?

...WELL, BEING CHILDHOOD FRIENDS, SHE'S CERTAINLY SPECIAL TO ME.

...THAT ERIRI WAS YOUR FIRST LOVE.
WHICH REMINDS ME, YOU TOLD ME ONCE BEFORE...

...WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S WITH KATOU TODAY?
FEELS LIKE THIS HAS TURNED INTO A CONVER-SATION ABOUT MY LOVE LIFE.
OKAY. IT'S BESIDE THE MIRROR... I GUESS YOU KNOW THAT.
I'LL GO DRY MY HAIR.

YOU'VE BEEN TALKING CRAZY ALL DAY!

ARE YOU GOING TO CONFESS TO HER?

...YUP.

KASUMIGAOKA-SENPAI IS GRADUATING, HUH?

...DO YOU REALIZE THERE'S A SIDE OF HER SHE ONLY SHOWS TO YOU?

BUT YOU DO ADMIRE HER, DON'T YOU?

...HOW COULD I NOT?

...I KIND OF KNOW, I THINK.

...YOU KNOW IT, AND THAT'S HOW YOU ACT?

JUST GET TO SLEEP.

AND HERE I'D THOUGHT SHE WAS WINDING DOWN...

SO ANYWAY ...

...MY PLAN IS TO ASK THOSE TWO TO JOIN THE CIRCLE AGAIN WITH THIS PROPOSAL.

I BOUGHT IT AT A CONVENIENCE STORE EARLIER.

THIS IS FOR YOU, AKI-KUN.

LABEL: BLACK DANCER

THAT'S STILL SUSPICIOUS...

YEAH, OF COURSE IT IS... I WON'T FORGET IT.

EVEN IF, TOMORROW, KATOU'S SPELL BREAKS AND SHE TURNS FLAT AGAIN...

...I'LL NEVER FORGET THIS PAIN-IN-THE-NECK KATOU TODAY AS LONG AS I LIVE...

...'COS I KNOW IT'LL MAKE FOR A FUN...

...AWKWARD...

...AND MOE-FILLED SCENARIO.

END

41
平成●年度
卒業
私立
BANNER: 2009 GRADUATION, TOHOGAKUIN

OH! KASUMI-GAOKA-SAN...
WE'RE ABOUT TO HAVE A THANK-YOU PARTY FOR THE TEACHERS —
EEEP!
SUTA すた
SUTA (THUD) すた
わい GAYA (CHATTER)
わい GAYA
わいーわいー WAI
わいーわいー WAI (GAB)
CONGRATU-LATIONS ON GRADUATING... UTAHA-SENPAI.

A CLOSET LONER SURE DOES TALK DIFFERENTLY ...

POOR THINGS ...

THAT WAS SO SCARY!

AREN'T YOU GOING TO THE THANK-YOU PARTY?

AND I HAVEN'T THE SLIGHTEST IOTA OF ATTACHMENT TO MY CLASS-MATES.

I DON'T FEEL EVEN A REMOTE NEED TO GO.

TECHNICALLY, THAT'S WHAT I DID, BUT IF YOU CAN, PLEASE PUT IT MORE MILDLY.

ANYWAY, I NEVER IMAGINED YOU WOULD BE LYING IN WAIT FOR ME, RINRI-KUN.

BUT I REALLY DIDN'T THINK YOU WOULD COME SEE ME ...

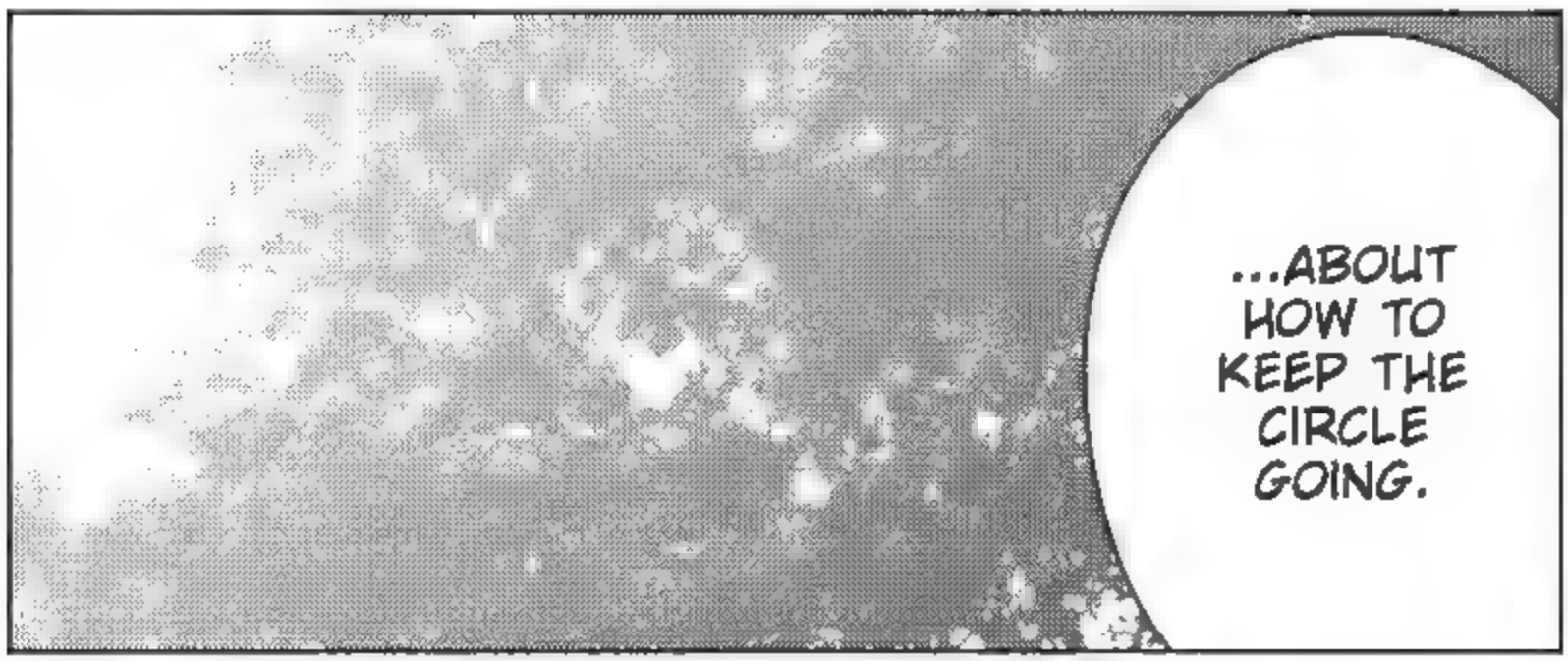
DON'T DO OR SAY ANYTHING SO IMMATURE. AND BUTTONS ARE FOR THE BOYS TO GIVE AWAY WHEN THEY GRADUATE.

平成●年度 卒業式

WHY AREN'T YOU WEARING YOUR UNIFORM? IT'S GRADUATION. I THOUGHT I'D BE TEARING ALL THE BUTTONS OFF IT.

...
UTAHA-SENPAI.
I'VE BEEN THINK-ING...

AND AFTER THE WAY WE PARTED LAST TIME...


...ABOUT HOW TO KEEP THE CIRCLE GOING.

...PLEASE GIVE ME A CHANCE.
SO EVEN IF IT'S JUST A SMALL ONE...

...ALL RIGHT.
A PROJECT PROPOSAL ...?
Game Project Proposal (Second Draft)
Tomoya Aki

YES. FOR A NEW PROJECT...

OUR NEXT ONE...

IT'S STILL ONLY A TENTATIVE PROPOSAL AT BEST, BUT I'M GOING TO FLESH IT OUT.

OUR <SECOND PROJECT>!

I WANT YOU TO PARTICIPATE EVEN AFTER GRADUATION, UTAHA-SENPAI.

TO DO THAT, I NEED TO COME UP WITH A PROPOSAL THAT'LL MAKE YOU WANT TO JOIN IN—

THAT'S WHAT THIS PROPOSAL IS FOR?

THIS IS WHAT I DETER-MINED.

BUT I'D LIKE IT IF WE COULD ALL WORK ON IT TO-GETHER.

UTAHA-SENPAI, ERIRI, MAYBE MICHIRU, ME...

...AND KATOU TOO.

YES!

I WON'T LET IT BECOME A MEMORY YET.

THIS IS FOR OUR CIRCLE'S FUTURE.

BUT IT'S NO GOOD TO JUST TALK ABOUT MY DREAMS.

I HAVE TO MAKE HER WANT TO JOIN THE PROJECT.

IT HAS TO BE GOOD ENOUGH TO EVEN MAKE A PRO DECIDE TO JOIN.

SO, IF YOU'D LET ME READ THIS...

...PLEASE.

I'LL WIN HER DECISION WITH THIS PROPOSAL ...

...IN THESE NEXT FEW DOZEN MIN-UTES!

MM-HM...

SO, I'VE GIVEN IT A QUICK READ THROUGH.

R-REALLY...?
...BUT I CAN GET AN OVERALL PICTURE OF THE FINISHED PRODUCT.
THERE'S A LOT OF THINGS BEYOND WHAT'S WRITTEN HERE I'D HAVE TO CONFIRM...

FOR A PROPOSAL, I'D GIVE YOU ABOUT... SEVENTY-FIVE POINTS.
YES. YOU'VE DONE WELL, RINRI-KUN.

!!!

OHH ...!

NO, THAT IN ITSELF WASN'T AN ISSUE.
AND IT TURNED OUT GREAT ANY-WAY.

I SEE...
THE FANTASTIC ELEMENTS IN THE LAST PROJECT CERTAINLY MAY HAVE CHANGED THE DIRECTION OF THIS CIRCLE A BIT.

YES, I KNOW...
...THOUGH, I CAN'T DENY I DOMINATED IT AS A RESULT.

BUT THAT'S EXACTLY WHY THE IMAGE OF "BLESSING SOFTWARE" NOW IS WE PUT OUT GAMES THAT PLACE IMPORTANCE ON THAT TYPE OF STORY.
SO, IF WE SUDDENLY COME OUT WITH THIS FOR OUR NEXT PROJECT, THAT UNPREDICTABILITY COULD BE JUICY.
CHANCE MEANS RISK, BUT...

...YOU'VE LEARNED TO SPEAK YOUR MIND, HUH...

...THAT'S WHEN DOING DOUJIN IS THE RIGHT PLAN OF ATTACK, RIGHT?

...RINRI-KUN?

SENPAI WANTED A DISCUSSION ABOUT IT.

I SEE... IF WE DID THAT, WE COULD...

YOU PUT EACH CHARACTER'S PERSONALITY ON THE Y-AXIS AND THEN THE CONTENTS OF EVENTS THAT COULD HAPPEN AND LOCATIONS ON THE X-AXIS AND FILL UP A TABLE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

TRUE, IF WE MAKE A MISTAKE REUSING EVENTS...IF YOU COME UP WITH A SYSTEM TO ASSEMBLE THE SCENARIO, THOUGH, IT COULD REDUCE THE WORK-LOAD.

NO. IF WE DO THAT, I THINK IT'LL CUT THE PROJECT'S APPEAL [redacted] HALF.

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED ROUTES SHARING EVENTS?

THE IDEAS ARE COMING UP, ONE AFTER THE OTHER

OH NO. THIS IS FUN.

THIS IS WAY TOO FUN...

YOU COULD JUST DO EVEN ONE ROUTE. NO—YOU CAN EVEN JUST GIVE EDITORIAL SUPERVI-SION!

PLEASE!
BA (WHAP)

SO, UTAHA-SENPAI ...
...IF THE WORK-LOAD IS TOO MUCH, YOU'D ONLY NEED TO TAKE ON A LITTLE. SO...
...WOULD YOU JOIN ME ON THIS PROJECT?

AND WHAT WAS HER ANSWER?

...HAVE YOU ASKED HER ABOUT THIS?

SAWAMURA-SAN'S NAME IS LISTED AMONG THE STAFF.

I'VE THOUGHT OF LOTS OF BACKUP PLANS FOR THAT EVEN IN THE PROPOSAL DOCUMENT ...

OH! IS IT ERIRI'S SLUMP YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT ?

I SEE ...

NO... I WAS GOING TO AFTER THIS.

ERIRI ?

HOW CRUEL, SAWA-MURA-SAN...

UTAHA-SENPAI ...?

I'M THE ONE WHO HAS TO TELL YOU THIS.

I SEE... SO I HAVE TO BE FIRST.

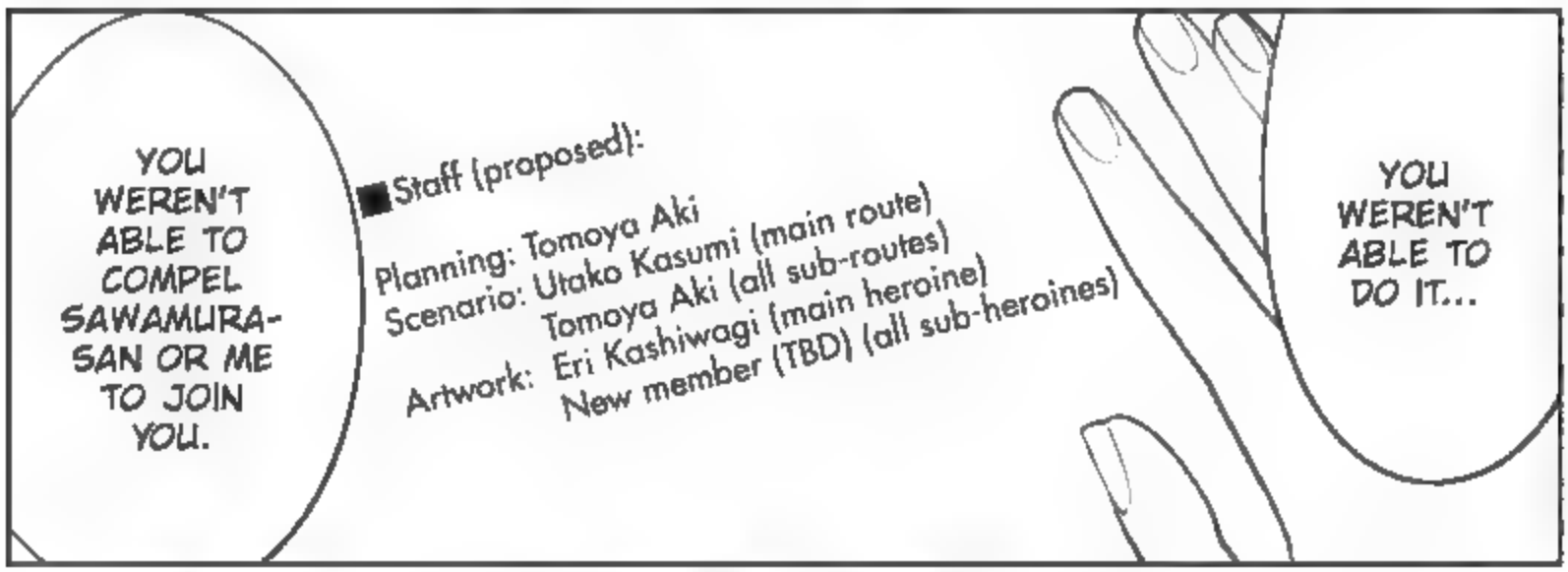
I'M SORRY, RINRI-KUN...

I CAN'T WORK WITH YOU ANYMORE.

...FOR YOU OR ERIRI!
IT'S NOT THAT BIG A WORK-LOAD ...

HUH .....?
THAT'S JUST IT, RINRI-KUN.

I NO LONGER HAVE THE ROOM TO BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN YOUR PROJECTS.
IT'S SIMPLE...


YOU WEREN'T ABLE TO COMPEL SAWAMURA-SAN OR ME TO JOIN YOU.
■Staff (proposed):
Planning: Tomoya Aki
Scenario: Utako Kasumi (main route)
Tomoya Aki (all sub-routes)
Artwork: Eri Kashiwagi (main heroine)
New member (TBD) (all sub-heroines)
YOU WEREN'T ABLE TO DO IT...

...THAT'S WAY BEYOND MY CURRENT TALENT.
WELL ...

THEN IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU TO GET THIS DONE.
...!

YOU DIDN'T PRODUCE A PROPOSAL WHICH MAKES US WANT TO...
...THROW EVERYTHING ELSE ASIDE EVEN IF IT WEARS US DOWN.

BUT YOU'RE SO BUSY, UTAHA-SENPAI.
AND ERIRI, WELL —

THAT'S WHY YOU'RE NOT SUITED TO BEING A PRODUCER, RINRI-KUN...
EVEN IF YOU DO NOTHING, YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO DEMAND THAT PEOPLE AIM FOR THEIR ABSOLUTE LIMITS.
YOU HAVE TO LEAVE PEOPLE IN HELL WHILE YOU SCURRY OFF HOME.
IF YOU FEEL GUILTY AND CAN'T MAKE YOUR CREATORS OBEY YOU...
...YOU'VE FAILED AS A PRODUCER.
SEE, THE THING ABOUT US CREATORS IS...
...THE MOMENT YOU ALLOW US TO NOT OVEREXERT OURSELVES, WE STOP GROWING.
IF WE'RE NOT IN A DESPERATE SHOWDOWN, WE CAN'T IMPROVE.
WE FACE AN IMPOSSIBLE DEADLINE, AND WE FIGHT FOR THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE ALLOTTED TIME AND QUALITY.

BUT... THAT KIND OF DETERMINATION IS FAR BEYOND MY REACH.

THAT SOUNDED SO COOL...

"WORK YOURSELF TO DEATH" WAS THE FIRST THING THEY SAID TO ME.

WHA.....!?

...HAVE YOU MET A PRODUCER LIKE THAT?

UTAHA-SENPAI ...

I'VE ONLY HEARD RUMORS... ABOUT A FEW PEOPLE THAT CUCKOO IN THE INDUSTRY ...

THEY CAN GO ●●●● OFF.

...THOUGH I HATE THEM AS A PERSON.

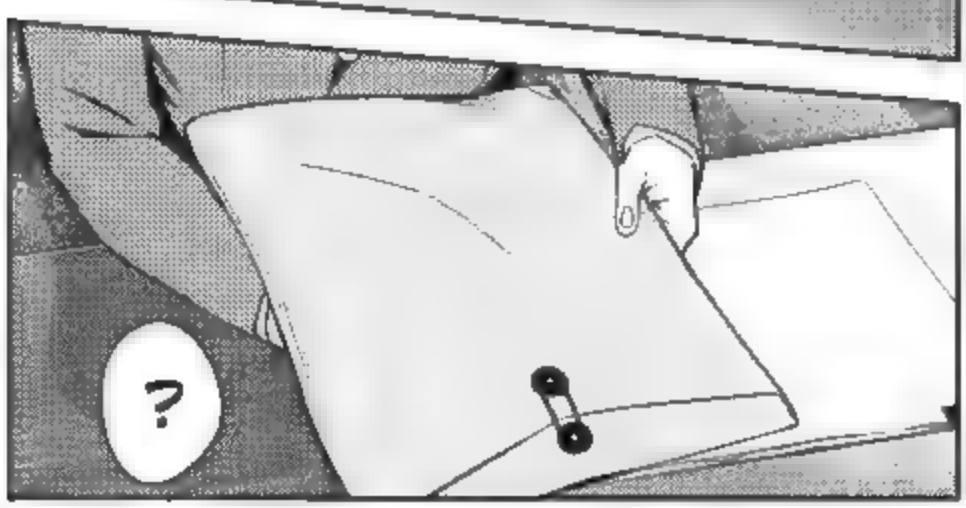
BUT WHEN I SAW THEIR PROJECT PROPOSAL...

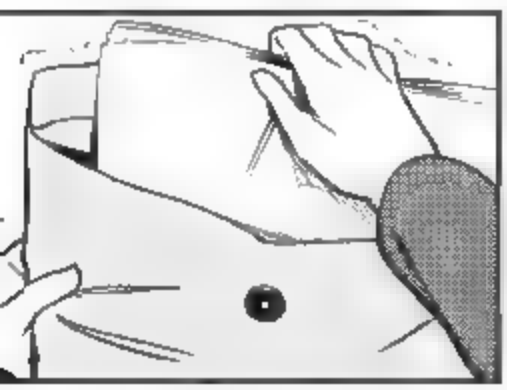
... WELL...

...I WOULD'VE BEEN HAPPY TO DIE FOR IT...

U-UTAHA-SENPAI...
...I'M SORRY IF I'M WRONG ABOUT THIS...
...BUT, UM—
...YOU WERE GOING TO FIND OUT SOONER OR LATER.

—YOU NEED TO BEWARE...


?



WHA...!?

I HAVE PERMISSION TO SHOW IT TO YOU...
BUT AT THE MOMENT, IT'S TOP SECRET, SO DON'T TELL ANYONE ELSE ABOUT IT, OKAY?

Fields Chronicle (tentative title) Proposal Document
version) 02/2016 Akane Kousaka

Akane Kousaka

I KNEW IT...

THIS SCENARIO ...? UTAHA-SENPAI, ARE YOU...?

ALMOST BY ACCI-DENT...

... YES.

A MEGA-POPULAR RPG WITH TWELVE IN THE SERIES— MORE THAN TWENTY IF YOU COUNT SPIN-OFFS!

AND IT'S A MAJOR TITLE...!

THAT AKANE KOUSAKA IS WORKING ON THE NEWEST INSTALLMENT OF THIS HIT SERIES IS A HUGE SCOOP.

IT SEIZES MY HEART IN ONE FELL SWOOP...

...HOW MUCH ENERGY, TIME, AND TALENT SHE'S POURED INTO THE MAKING OF THIS...

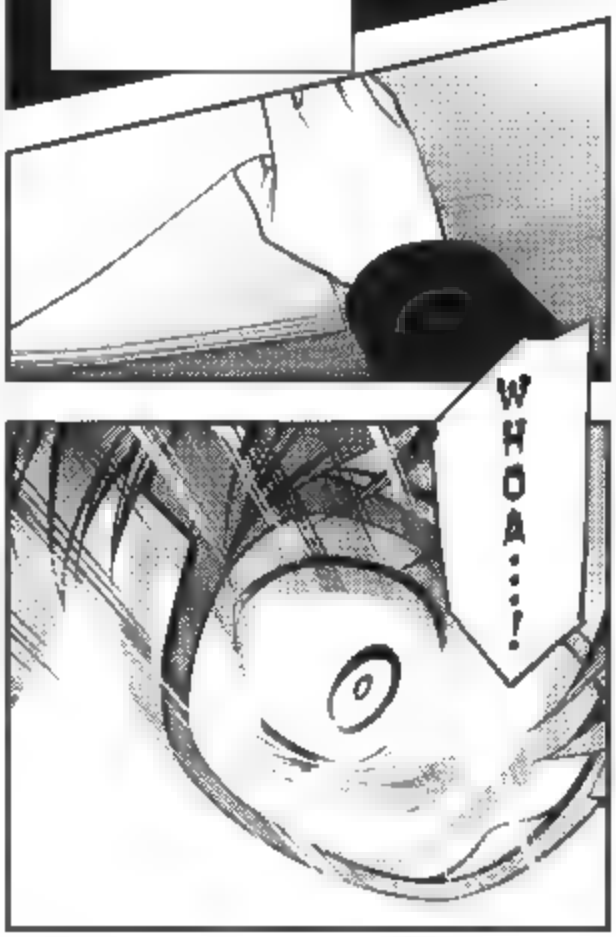
DID AKANE KOUSAKA CREATE THIS FROM SQUARE ONE?

SHE'S BEEN DOING ALL THAT SERIALIZATION AND SUPER-VISION ON COMICS AND ANIMATION, AND NOW SHE'S OVERSEEING THIS TOO? I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WHAT ANYMORE.

NO, IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE.

IT'S A WELL-KNOWN PATTERN THAT YOUNG BLOOD WHO GET HIRED ONTO THIS SERIES ARE GENERALLY ON THE ROAD TO STARDOM.

AND SENPAI WILL HAVE THE SAME FUTURE AS THE OTHER CREATORS DISCOVERED BY AKANE KOUSAKA.



...
WHEN DID SHE ...?
SHE FIRST APPROACHED ME AT WINTER COMIKET.

IF SOMEONE ASKED YOU WHICH PROPOSAL YOU WOULD CHOOSE, BETWEEN THIS ONE AND YOURS...
...WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?
.....!

THE EVENT HADN'T EVEN OPENED YET, SO I DON'T KNOW HOW SHE GOT AHOLD OF IT, BUT ANYWAY, SHE WAS GREATLY IMPRESSED.
Akane Kousaka
坂 朱音
SHE SAID SHE'D PLAYED OUR GAME...

THAT APPROACH DISGUSTED ME, AND I WAS DETERMINED TO SPIT IT BACK IN HER FACE.

MACHIDA-SAN WAS AGAINST IT, BUT WORD CAME DOWN FROM ABOVE EDITORIAL, AND SHE COULDN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.
LATER, A FORMAL OFFER CAME IN VIA FUSHI-KAWA PUBLISH-ING...

THEN THEY SHOWED YOU THIS PROPOSAL ...?

...BUT.

elds Chronicle [Ne
version] 02/201

THAT WOMAN IS SERIOUSLY OUT OF HER MIND.

THAT WASN'T ALL SHE SHOWED ME...

DIDN'T SHE SAY SHE WANTED TO WORK WITH ERIRI AGAIN? THAT SHE WANTED TO CREATE SOMETHING THAT SURPASSED OUR FIRST PROJECT, USING ERI KASHIWAGI'S ART!?

BUT, BUT...!

S-SENPAI ...

UTAHA-SENPAI ...!

...I'M SORRY, TOMOYA-KUN.

... "BLESSING SOFTWARE," WITH ERIRI— WITH ERI KASHIWAGI IN IT WOULD BE...

THEN MY CIRCLE ...

...HUH?

...BE-TRAYAL.

... GREAT-EST...

...IS MY...

WHAT I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU...

THE ONE AKANE KOUSAKA WAS REALLY AFTER...

Staff
Planning, Story, Characters
Script: Urako Kasumi
Character Design: Eri Kashiwagi

...WASN'T ME.

I WANTED ...

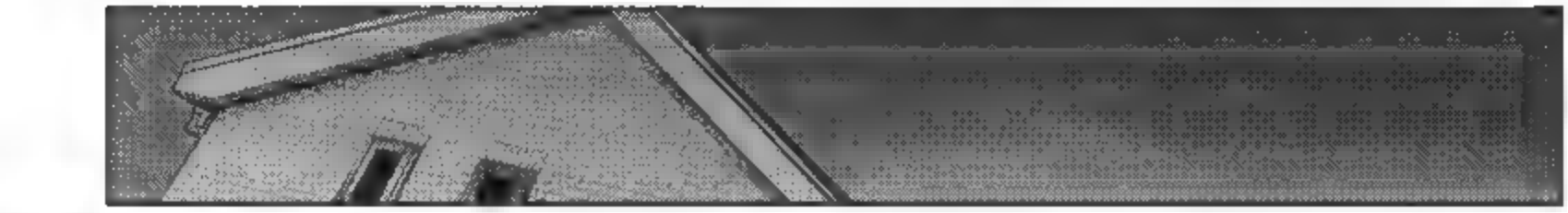
...TO WORK WITH ERI KASHIWAGI AGAIN ...!

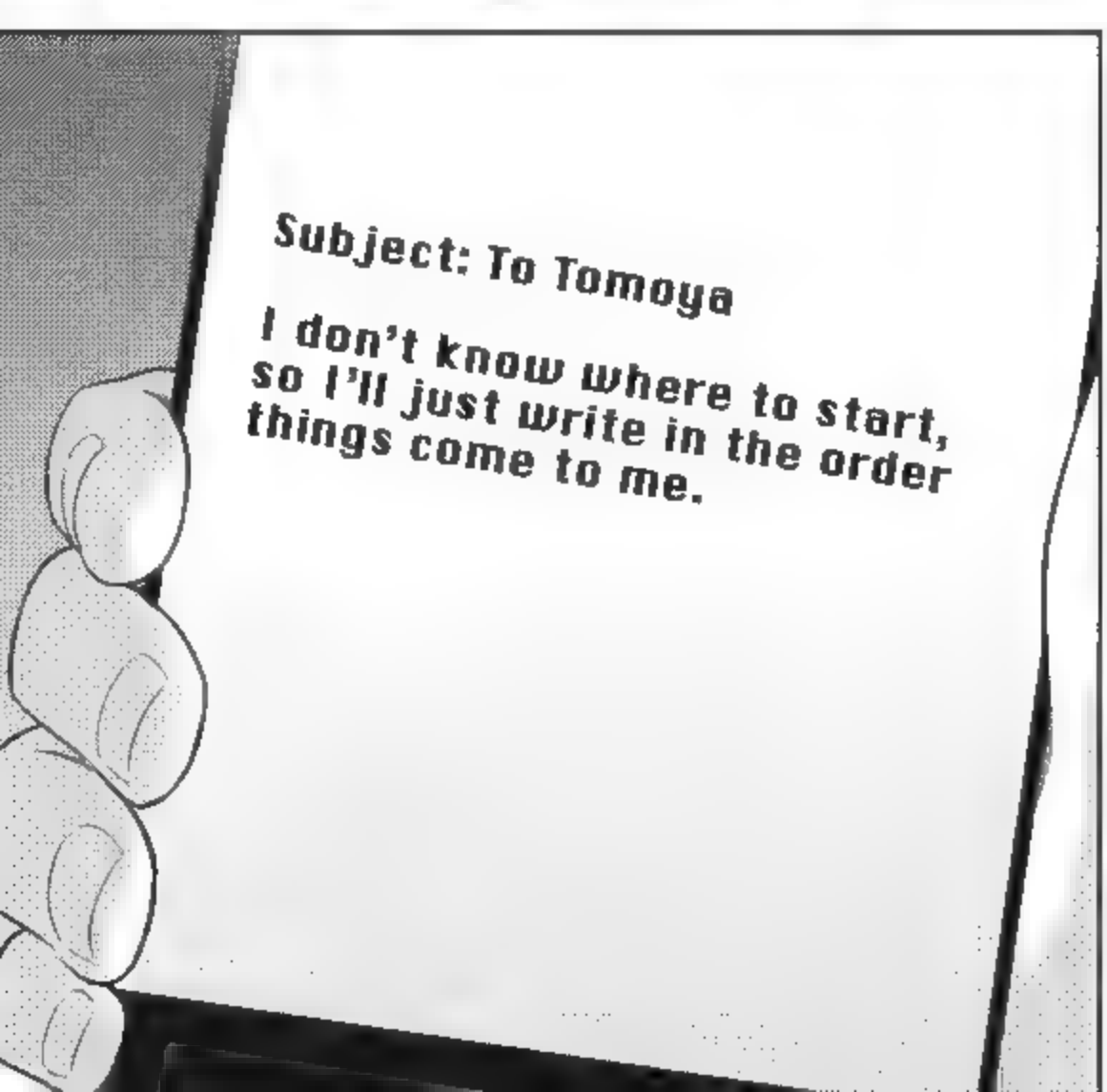
LIES .....

YOU'RE LYING ...!

-SNIFF-
I'm sorry ...

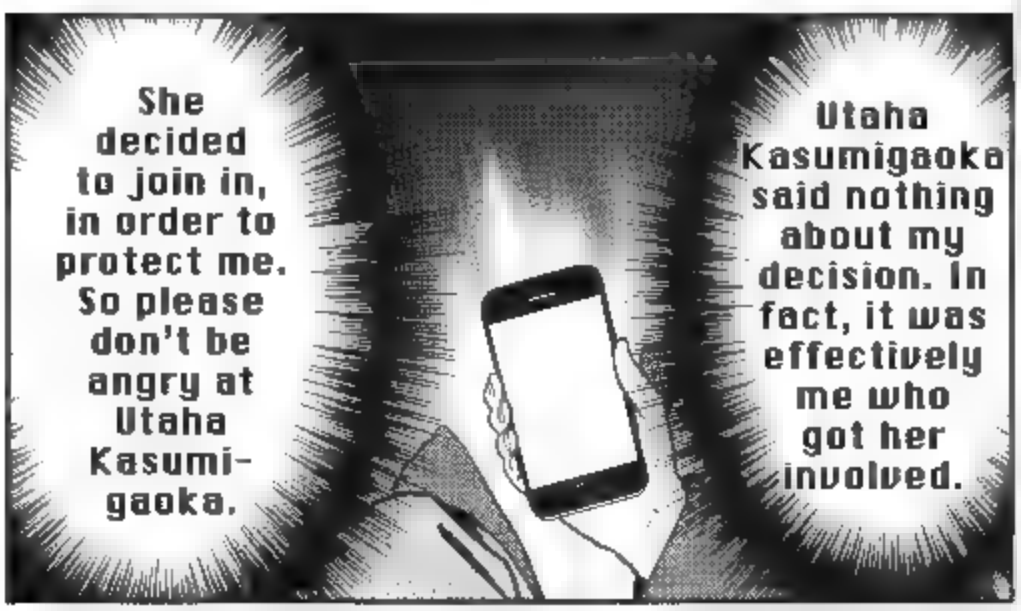
-SNIFF-
I'm sorry, Tomoya ...
GUH...

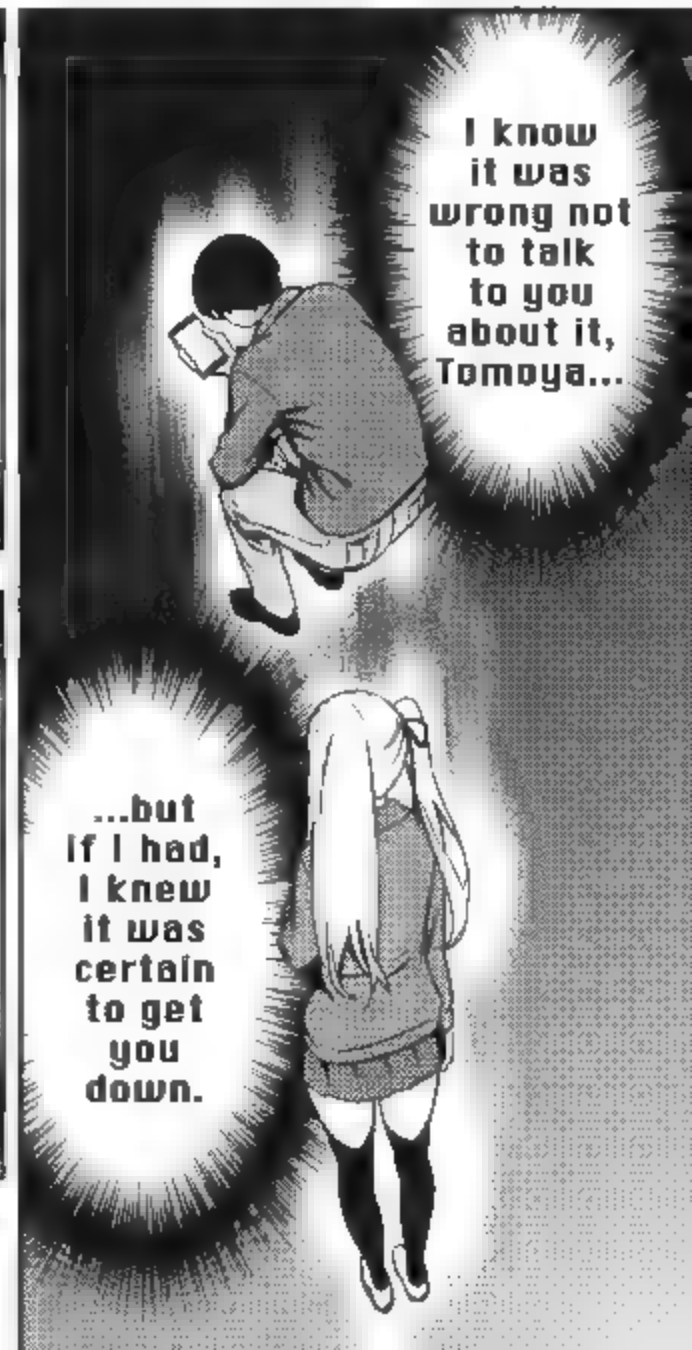




This is something I thought over and decided on.

First of all... don't blame Utaha Kasumigaoka.





I REGRET THAT. IT WAS A FAILURE THAT STILL PAINS ME.

BUT— BUT...

I ACCEPTED HER BUSINESS CARD, AND THAT LED TO SAWAMURA-SAN BEING INTRODUCED TO AKANE KOUSAKA.

...YOU COULD SAY I SOLD HER.

IT WAS HER LAST CHANCE TO CONTINUE ON AS A CREATOR AND NOT BE CRUSHED.

IT WASN'T FOR HER SUCCESS. IT WAS FOR HER REVITALIZATION.

...I HAD ONLY ONE HOPE.

I don't know how, but she knew it was my art from the very begin-ning.

Akane Kousaka knew it was my art.

...AT THE HANDS OF AKANE KOU-SAKA.

AND THEN, MY WISH CAME TRUE. ERI KASHIWAGI CAME BACK TO LIFE...

...Sorry. It must only make you sick to hear that from me.

Isn't that something to be proud of?

Your circle was marked by Akane Kousaka.

The first time I met Akane Kousaka, she said something incredibly rude to me.

She said I couldn't draw anymore because only my eyes had matured, and my hands couldn't catch up.

She flatly denied I was in a slump.

And she said all this while laughing.

She said I was embar-rassed by my lack of real abil-ity and my own terri-ble art.

I was frustrated and embarrassed, and I didn't want to lose to her...
There's no way I could beat that monster, but I still didn't want to lose...
I'll e-mail you the new package art. Check your PC.
She totally dismissed my art, and she tried to crush me using her own art and expression.
I'd never met such an immature adult in my life!
...and before I knew it, I was able to draw again.
!!!

.....This is my greatest work to date.
.....
WHOA.
ERIRI, THIS IS INCREDI-BLE...!

IF YOU SERIOUSLY ASKED THAT OF HER, SHE'D IMMEDIATELY TAKE YOUR SIDE.
YOU'D PROBABLY BE ABLE TO MAKE HER CHANGE HER MIND EVEN NOW.
YOU COULD SAY, "DON'T DRAW ANY ART AND STAY WITH ME..."

I WANT TO SEE MORE OF ERI KASHIWAGI'S ART.
I WANT TO SEE HER GET BETTER AND BETTER AND REACH THE TOP...
...NOT JUST AS HER FRIEND, BUT AS A PASSIONATE FAN OF ERI KASHIWAGI—AS A TRUE BELIEVER.

BUT IS THAT REALLY THE FUTURE SAWAMURA-SAN WANTS ?
IS THAT... YOUR IDEAL VISION OF HER FUTURE, TOMOYA-KUN?

I can't draw if I'm by your side, Tomoya.

And you're unable to force me to draw, Tomoya.

So if I were to stay in the circle any longer, it would be our mutual downfall.

I can't let that happen. If I can't draw, I'm not the real me...

...'cos I'm an otaku and a creator... and I will never abandon those two things.

AND IF I CAN BE BY HER SIDE, SHINING BRILLIANTLY AS WELL...

...AND IF I CAN JUST HAPPEN TO MAKE HER SHINE A BIT BRIGHTER...

....THERE WOULD BE NO GREATER JOY FOR ME AS A WRITER, I THINK.

So I'm leaving.

I'm sorry we have to part again, after we'd only just patched things up. I'm sorry...

I'd finally drawn some art I myself think is amazing.

I got a taste of heaven ...

...and now I've found a way to get there again.

ALSO, I WANTED ...

...TO BE A LITTLE MEAN TO YOU.

But tell her I'll love her always.

I couldn't ask her to stay friends.

I couldn't do it directly.

P.S. Apologize to Megumi for me, Tomoya.

BUT WHAT IF I EMBEDDED A TRAUMA THAT WOULD STAY WITH YOU YOUR WHOLE LIFE?

...AND YOU WOULD PROBABLY FORGET ABOUT ME EVENTUALLY.

EVEN IF IT ISN'T TODAY, SOMEDAY, WE WILL PART...

...BUT I WON'T SAY IT...

...AND THERE WAS ONE OTHER REASON...

SO I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE INTERESTING TO CORRUPT YOUR MEMORIES OF ME AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.

...YOU WOULD NEVER FORGET ME.

THAT WAY...

...even now, Tomoya, I.....

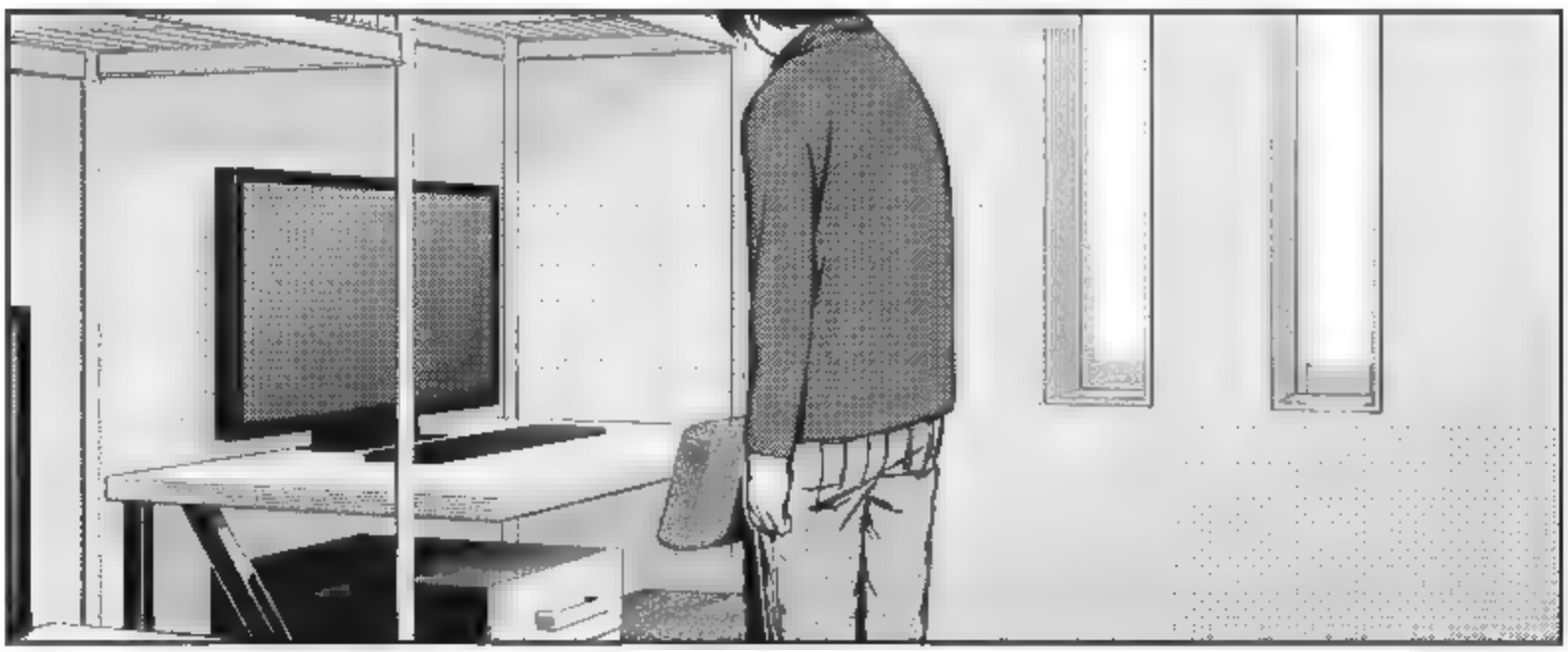
BECAUSE I WANT YOU TO HATE ME, BECAUSE I WANT YOU TO NEVER FORGET ME.

SO I CAN'T TELL YOU.

P.S. Also... Also...

...BECAUSE, IF I TOLD YOU, IT WOULD BE YOUR SALVATION.

GOOD-BYE.



END

CHEERS!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

AHHHH!

LAST YEAR, WE HAD AN ANIME, A GAME, AND NEW CHAPTERS OF THE LIGHT NOVELS!

SO MUCH STUFF!

THIS STRIP RAN SPECIALLY IN THE FEBRUARY 2016 ISSUE OF DRAGON MAGAZINE AND APPEARS HERE AS A BONUS COMIC.

GUTAA (WIPED)

ぐたー……

WHY ARE YOU SO PLEASED ABOUT IT, RINRI-KUN? WE'RE EXHAUSTED FROM BEING SO BUSY!

I'M STILL BEAT.

LET'S CALL THAT A HAPPY TIRED-NESS!

AND YOU COULD AT LEAST ACT HAPPY FOR OUR NEW YEAR'S PARTY.

THIS "MEDIA MIX" THING REALLY EXPANDS OUR WORLD.

IT WAS FUN FOR ME! I LIKED SEEING THE WAYS THINGS WERE DIFFERENT FROM THE LIGHT NOVELS!

MISAKI-SENSEI'S ILLUSTRATIONS ARE ALWAYS SO BEAUTIFUL.

IF I HAD HIM IN MY CIRCLE, WHAT KIND OF CHEMISTRY WOULD THERE BE...?

YES.

MARUTO-SENSEI, WHO WROTE THE NOVELS, ALSO WROTE THE SCRIPTS FOR THE ANIME, DIDN'T HE?

GAH!

DAN (BAM)

I'M TELLING YOU!

WHAD'RE YOU TALKIN' 'BOUT!? WHATEVER GUYSH SAY, THEY ALL LIKE BOOBS, SO THA EPISODE O' ME AN' RINRI-KUN MUSTA BEEN TOPS FER SHURE!

THE EPISHODE ABOUT TOMOYUH AN' ME MUST'VE GOT THE HIGHESHT RATINGS!

NO. BUT IT MAY HAVE HAD A STRONG EFFECT, SINCE THEY'RE EXHAUST-ED.

DOES AMAZAKE NORMALLY MAKE YOU DRUNK?

COULD IT BE...THIS AMAZAKE ERIRI BROUGHT?

FROM HER MOM... PRICEY...

WHAAAT? WHAT'S WITH YOU ALL OF A SUDDEN?

FINE!

WE'LL GET TOMOYA TO DECIDE...

MY, MY, MY! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE SAYING... NO— SHOWING ...

...WHOSE FANSERVICE MAKES PEOPLE THE HAPPIEST!

...WITH THAT SUBPAR, CURVE-LESS FIGURE?

GWAH!? WHY IS THIS HAPPEN-ING!?

GABA (WHAP)

IZUMI! WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU!?

NOW IS THE TIME FOR ME TO **BUST** OUT AS A LOLI BIG-BOOB ARTIST!

I WON'T BE BEAT EITHER!

WHAT!?

UH, AKI-KUN, SHOULD I TELEPHONE THE BP●?

SHUT UP, YOU WORTHLESS SEX FIEND!

DID YOU HEAR THAT, SAWAMURA-SAN? WHY DON'T YOU TRY TO MAKE THE FLAT-CHESTED CHARACTER THE STANDARD?

EXACTLY! ALL OF YOU! THE FANS ENJOY YOUR DIFFERENCES IN POPULARITY AND BREAST SIZE!

ALL OF YOU, CALM DOWN! THAT HAS TO BE DECIDED BY THE AUDIENCE!

MM... ZZZ....

HERE'S TO *HOW TO RAISE A BORING GIRLFRIEND* IN THIS COMING YEAR!

ZZZ...

KATOU, WAIT!

END

TRANSLATION NOTES

PAGES 56–58
The ribbons of Japanese text state as follows: "Concept: love, friendship, growth. The girl's bewitching transformation is depicted in detail, cultivating fondness for the heroine. We will portray a charming heroine such that, not only does the protagonist fall for her, but the players can truly love her too. The heroine's gestures, thinking, and actions will be portrayed in an attractive and lively way to make players feel like they are falling for an actual girl."

PAGE 61
It is customary in Japanese schools to **bow** at the start and end of every class.

PAGE 93
Black Dancer is a parody of Black Thunder, a Japanese brand of candy bar made with chocolate, cookie, and rice puffs.

PAGE 97
One Japanese graduation tradition is for boys to give to the girl they like the second **button** on their uniform—the one closest to their heart.

PAGE 161
The ***Shinkansen*** is Japan's national high-speed rail service, sometimes referred to as the "bullet trains."

Nozomi is the fastest *Shinkansen* line. It runs between Osaka and Tokyo.

To●●● Banana (Tokyo Banana) and **Goma Tama●●** (Goma Tamago) are two typical souvenir snacks at train stations. The former is a banana sponge cake, and the latter is egg-shaped and filled with sesame paste.

PAGE 168
"Rinri" means "moral," so ***"Furinri"*** means "immoral."

PAGE 175
Amazake is a sweet drink made from fermented rice. It typically contains very little to no alcohol.

PAGE 176
The **BP●**, or the Broadcasting Ethics & Program Improvement Organization, is a nonprofit, nongovernmental watchdog group for Japanese television. Their areas of focus include ethics in children's programming, calling out programs that present false or falsified information, and seeing if any programs infringe upon human rights.

How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

AFTER

This is my first word of hello since Volume 1. Back then, I wrote things like, "I hope you continue to enjoy seeing Katou going around like a cute hamster, and she'll never be showcased in the middle of the page." However, now that we're at this volume, all I can say is I've violated my promises in the extreme. But since it's been three years, I suppose it's past the statute of limitations. And so, I will be greatly pleased if you fully enjoy the extreme cuteness of her persistence, darkness, and the various other things which have trickled out from her flat expressions.

Fumiaki Maruto

WORD

AFTERWORD

I also had the pleasure of taking great care to draw *Boring Girlfriend*'s very important scenes. I'm grateful.

Kurehito Misaki

THE "MEGU-TAN, IF YOU CAN'T HAVE A PERSONALITY THAT STANDS OUT RIGHT AWAY, THEN WHY NOT WORK ON YOUR APPEARANCE FIRST?" SECTION☆
FINAL PART
LONG HAIR AND FIRST MEETING CLOTHES
THE COMIC ADAPTATION ENDS WITH THIS VOLUME. THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT!
* SPECIAL THANKS
CHIEF EDITORS * KURIHARA-SAMA (FIRST HALF)
* TOYOHARA-SAMA (SECOND HALF)
ASSISTANT * TSUKIMO-SAMA (VOLUMES 2-8)
© MARUTO-SENSEI, MISAKI-SENSEI,
AND ALL OUR READERS!

HOW TO RAISE A BORING GIRLFRIEND 8

TAKESHI MORIKI
Original Story: FUMIAKI MARUTO
Character Design: KUREHITO MISAKI

Translation: Kumar Sivasubramanian
Translation Consultant: Chitoku Teshima
Lettering: Phil Christie

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

SAENAI HEROINE NO SODATE-KATA Volume 8
©TAKESHI MORIKI 2016
©FUMIAKI MARUTO, KUREHITO MISAKI 2016.
First published in Japan in 2016 by KADOKAWA CORPORATION, Tokyo.
English translation rights reserved by YEN PRESS, LLC under the license
from KADOKAWA CORPORATION, Tokyo through TUTTLE-MORI AGENCY, Inc., Tokyo.

English translation © 2017 by Yen Press, LLC

Yen Press, LLC supports the right to free expression and the value of copyright. The purpose of copyright is to encourage writers and artists to produce the creative works that enrich our culture.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this book without permission is a theft of the author's intellectual property. If you would like permission to use material from the book (other than for review purposes), please contact the publisher. Thank you for your support of the author's rights.

Yen Press
1290 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10104

Visit us!
- yenpress.com
- facebook.com/yenpress
- twitter.com/yenpress
- yenpress.tumblr.com
- instagram.com/yenpress

First Yen Press Edition: December 2017

Yen Press is an imprint of Yen Press, LLC.
The Yen Press name and logo are trademarks of Yen Press, LLC.

The publisher is not responsible for websites (or their content) that are not owned by the publisher.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2015952583

ISBNs: 978-0-316-47236-4 (paperback)
978-0-316-44659-4 (ebook)

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

BVG

Printed in the United States of America

SO EVEN YOU WEREN'T FAST ENOUGH, TOMOYA-KUN.

I SEE...

CHAPTER 42

YOU WARNED ME, AND I BLEW IT. IT'S MY FAULT.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY...

UH-HUH.....

ANYWAY, IT WAS BASICALLY CHECKMATE FROM THE MOMENT AKANE-SAN SET HER SIGHTS ON THEM.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT...

...THE OUTRAGEOUS IMAGE YOU GET IS AKANE KOUSAKA IS AN ADULT YET STILL A CRUEL CHILD— A GENIUS BORDERING ON INSANITY.

...TALKING TO VARIOUS PEOPLE...

...BUT SHE'S COMPLETELY INDIFFERENT ABOUT THAT KIND OF THING.

I EVEN SUGGESTED TO AKANE-SAN THAT SHE SHOULD MAKE A FORMAL GREETING TO YOU AS A CIRCLE REPRESENTATIVE...

YOU TOOK ME ALONG TO SAY HI TO HER ONCE IN JUNIOR HIGH, AND THAT WAS IT.

I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT SHE LOOKS LIKE.

YEAH. SHE'S SERIOUSLY MENTAL.

ALTHOUGH, SHE HARDLY LOOKS THAT WAY AT ALL ON THE OUTSIDE, RIGHT?

...SERIOUSLY?

YEAH, THAT'S WHAT SHE'S LIKE.

THAT'S A GOOD WAY TO PUT IT.

HALF A YEAR AGO, HE WAS THE ONE TRYING TO POACH ERIRI OFF ME...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

OH RIGHT...

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, THAT DID HAPPEN.

...IT'S A VERY STRANGE FEELING.

...AND NOW HERE WE ARE, SWORN ENEMIES, GRIMACING OVER OUR FAILURES TOGETHER.

IF YOU'RE THAT FEISTY, THEN I GUESS YOU'LL COME TO CLASS WHEN THE NEW TERM STARTS.

THANK GOODNESS FOR THAT. IT'D BE BAD IF YOU'D TURNED INTO A SHUT-IN OR SOMETHING NOW.

I'M ALREADY A SHUT-IN. TODAY IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE BEEN OUT IN TWO WEEKS.

I SEE. I'M GLAD TO HEAR THAT.

SHALL WE HEAD UP TO THE ROOF, THEN?

AT ANY RATE, YOU SEEM TO HAVE RECOVERED BETTER THAN I EXPECTED, SO THAT'S A RELIEF...

WHEN I GOT IN TOUCH TODAY, I CAME HERE READY TO GET TWO OR THREE GOOD WHACKS.

ACTUALLY, IT'S NOT STRANGE AT ALL.

REALLY? OH, GOOD. IN THAT CASE, STARTING TONIGHT, I REALLY WILL SHUT MYSELF IN AND SCREAM MY HEAD OFF.

IF THAT'S TRUE, I'LL PICK UP THE BILL TODAY.

EVEN NOW, I WAKE UP SCREAMING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.

A LONG TIME AGO, I FOUGHT WITH ERIRI, AND A LONG TIME LATER, WE MADE AMENDS.
BUT AFTER TWO MONTHS, IT FELL TO PIECES.
A YEAR AGO, UTAHA-SENPAI AND I HAD A FALLING OUT AND, SOME MONTHS LATER, RESTORED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS...
...BUT SEVERAL MONTHS LATER, AGAIN, WE FELL OUT.
LOOKING AT THE FLOW OF MY RELATION-SHIPS WITH THEM...
...MAYBE IT'S TOTALLY NATURAL I'M HERE WITH HIM NOW TOO.
...I'VE PATCHED THINGS UP WITH HIM "FOR NOW."
...BASI-CALLY...

I'VE QUIT "ROUGE EN ROUGE."

ACTUALLY... THERE'S ONE OTHER THING I HAVE TO TELL YOU ABOUT.

WHAT'S THAT?

GO TO HELL, DAMN IT!

THAT'S RIGHT. IN YOUR CASE, YOU'RE NOT ACTUALLY AN OTAKU, AND WITH YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND LOOKS, YOU COULD DO WHATEVER ELSE YOU WANTED...

COULD YOU DECIDE IF YOU'RE GOING TO PRAISE ME OR DISS ME BEFORE YOU SPEAK?

WELL, "ROUGE EN ROUGE" ISN'T THE ONLY THING IN LIFE.

YOU DON'T SEEM VERY FAZED ABOUT IT.

MY AMBITION TO RULE THE DOUJIN WORLD IS GONE TOO, SEE?

IN A SENSE, IT'S LIKE I'VE DIS-OBEYED AKANE-SAN.

WELL, NOW I DON'T BELONG ANY-WHERE.

...I DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT YOU, BUT WHAT'S IZUMI-CHAN GOING TO DO?
ANY-WAY ...
GISHI (CREAK)

...BUT THEY WERE REALLY TRYING TO GET HER TO STAY.
SHE LEFT WITH ME...

?
KUSU (SNICKER)

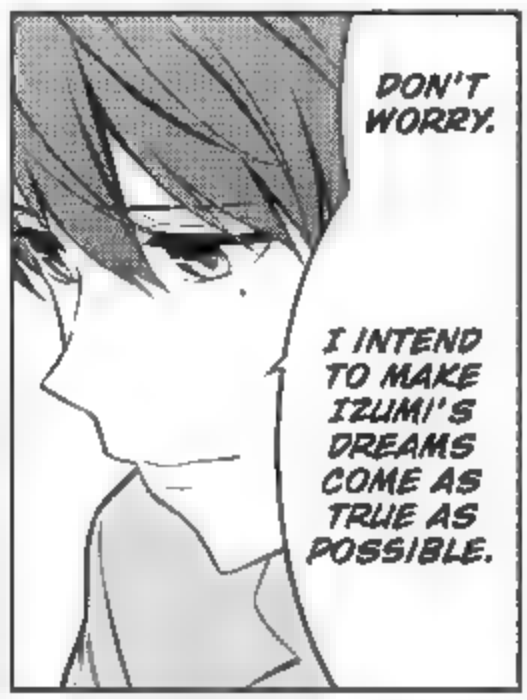
...!
GATA (CLATTER)

I CAN SEE WHY.
AND ERI KASHIWAGI HAS LEFT THAT NEST FOR THE PRO INDUSTRY NOW TOO, SO...
LOSING THAT PRECOCIOUS GENIUS IS, ON SOME LEVEL, PROBABLY A HEAVIER BLOW THAN LOSING A REPLACEABLE REP.

AHH...

IT'S NOTH-ING...

WHAT'S WRONG? YOU SUDDENLY CLUTCHED YOUR CHEST!



...THAT COMPE-TITION IS WORTH-LESS.
IT WAS A LESSON TO US ...

IN THE END... OUR FACE-OFF DIDN'T MAKE ANYBODY HAPPY, DID IT?

NO.
WORTH-LESS...?

WHEN IT COMES TO CREATIVE WORK, YOU DON'T IMPROVE WITHOUT COMPETI-TION...
IORI ?
WE HAPPENED TO FAIL THIS TIME, BUT TO MAKE THAT THE LESSON LEARNED AND GIVE UP THE FIGHT WOULD BE A MISTAKE.

SO I INTEND TO KEEP PICKING FIGHTS FOREVER...

...NOW MATTER HOW TOUGH MY OPPONENTS MAY BE.

YOU'LL KEEP IT GOING, RIGHT? YOUR CIRCLE, I MEAN.

I TOLD YOU MY HOPES THEN, DIDN'T I?

OH...

THE SAKURA ARE IN BLOOM.

...I SEE.

COM-PLETELY DIFFERENT SAKURA THAN LAST YEAR...

IT REALLY IS SPRING NOW.

...ARE NOW IN BLOOM.

I DIDN'T LEAVE THE HOUSE FOR TWO WEEKS, COME TO THINK OF IT.

JAKO (JRINK)

AFTER ALL, BACK THEN, I WAS JUST A BORED CONSUMER OTAKU...

...AND MY WORLD WAS THAT OF A SPECTATOR.

IN THAT WORLD LIVED CHARACTERS CREATED BY OTHERS.

NO. WHAT'S DIFFERENT IS MY SITUATION...

THEY FELL IN LOVE. I MERELY WATCHED IT ALL WITH EXCITEMENT.

THEY FOUGHT.

THEY CRIED.

THEY LAUGHED.

ZA (WHSH)

BUT NOW, I'M A CREATIVE, SELF-SERVICE OTAKU WHO PROVIDES THAT FOR HIMSELF.

BUWA (WHUSH)

I MAKE MY OWN WORLDS, AND I POPULATE THEM WITH CHARACTERS I CREATE.

I MAKE THEM FIGHT.

AND I MAKE THEM LOVE.

MAYBE EVEN BREAK THEIR HEARTS...

I MAKE THEM LAUGH.

I MAKE THEM CRY.

...IN THAT BROKEN WORLD... THAT BROKEN CIRCLE.

IN THAT MOMENT, I BECAME THE LAST INHABITANT LEFT...

BUT THAT PRESUMPTION HAS CRUMBLED, AND I LOST THE WORLD I CREATED...

I'M NOT SIGNED UP FOR A SINGLE EVENT AFTER SUMMER COMIKET, OKAY?

SHAAAD-DAAAPP!

AREN'T YOU BEING NAIVE, THINKING A CONSUMER OTAKU WITH NO REDEEMING TRAITS LIKE YOU CAN JUST MAKE A GAME OUT OF NOWHERE?

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF CREATORS, TOMOYA AKI-KUN.

THERE'S SOMETHING YOU NEED TO DO BEFORE YOU CAN GET US ON BOARD, ISN'T THERE?

YOUR PROPOSAL... I'D GIVE IT ZERO POINTS.

OOO (WHOOOH)
LONE-LINESS IS CLOSING IN ON ME ALL AT ONCE.
.....!
ZUZUZUZUZU (WHHSSSSZZ)
THAT MY—
OUR CIRCLE HAS TRULY DISINTE-GRATED INTO THIN AIR.
...THAT "BLESSING SOFTWARE" NO LONGER EXISTS.
MY HEAD IS TRYING TO ADMIT ...
BYUU (WHOOSH)
ZAWA (SWISH)
!!!
IF YOU CAN GET HOME, YOU CAN CRY WITHOUT ANYONE NOTICING.
HURRY, HURRY ...
SO HURRY UP, ME!
ONCE I GET UP THIS HILL, IT'S JUST.....

HUH .....?

.....
HUH?
OH
.....!
A
SHORT
...
...BOB
...?
AH
HA
HA...
SO
WE MEET
AGAIN. IT'S
BEEN A
WHILE.
WHAT A
COINCI-
DENCE...

...
KATOU.
A SHORT BOB...
WHY ...?
SHE GOT A SHORT BOB CUT...?
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, I'VE BEEN OUT OF TOUCH FOR ABOUT A MONTH, HUH?
THANK GOODNESS YOU STILL REMEMBER ME...
...
TOMOYA
...
...AKI-KUN.
SHE GOT A SHORT BOB...
WELL...
FUWA (FLUTTER)
WELL, I STOPPED BY YOUR HOUSE, BUT YOUR MOM SAID YOU WERE OUT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A WHILE...
...AND THERE'RE SAKURA ...
...IT'S SPRING ...
SHE SAID I COULD WAIT IN YOUR ROOM...
...BUT I SORT OF THOUGHT...
A SHORT BOB IS...!
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT ...
SUTA (STEP)
BUT SHE SAID YOU'D BE BACK BY DINNER-TIME.

SO I CAME HERE TO WAIT FOR YOU...
...THIS WHOLE TIME!
WELCOME BACK...
...AKI-KUN.
...MEGUMI KATOU AS SHE WAS A YEAR AGO.
THE SHORT BOB...A NOSTALGIC LOOK...

SORRY. I WASN'T ABLE TO GET IN TOUCH FOR A WHILE.

YEAH. THESE PAST SEVERAL DAYS, I'VE HAD NO CONTACT FROM KATOU.

IT TOOK SOME TIME TO SORT THINGS OUT INSIDE MYSELF.

...I'M SORRY.

SO EVEN THOUGH YOU WERE SAD AND TROUBLED, AKI-KUN, I COULDN'T BE THERE FOR YOU...

I'D UNDER-STAND IF YOUR HEART WAS ABOUT TO BREAK TOO, KATOU.

I'M THE ONE ...

... WHO'S SORRY.

I TEXTED KATOU THAT ERIRI AND UTAHA-SENPAI WERE LEAVING ME, AND I'VE HAD MY PHONE SWITCHED OFF SINCE.

SO IT'S MUTUAL.

I WANTED TO SEE HER, BUT IF WE ACTUALLY MET, I WOULDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.

WE'D PROBABLY BOTH KEEP A LOT TO OUR-SELVES.

BUT IT DIDN'T BREAK.

...I, WELL.....

KATOU .....

I WAS COUNTING ON KATOU TO CREATE THIS CHANCE TO TALK AGAIN.

YEAH.

I... WANT TO KEEP THE CIRCLE GOING.

SO NOW, I NEED TO MAKE A DECISION...

YEAH.

AND I'M NOT SURE EVEN SHE'LL STAY ON UNDER THE CIRCUM-STANCES.

OTHER THAN YOU, THE ONLY ONE LEFT IS MICHIRU THOUGH...

...THE WAY A CIRCLE REPRESENTATIVE SHOULD.

SO, MEGUMI KATOU...

BUT I...WANT TO MAKE ANOTHER GAME!

...AS A MAIN HEROINE AGAIN.
...THE ENVY OF EVERY-ONE...
PLEASE ...
... MAKE ME...
...BE MY MAIN HEROINE AGAIN!

MM-HM.
YEAH ...

AH. HA HA...
... HA...

... HEH HEH.

.....

AKI-KUN ...?

HA HA HA...
...HA HA...!

GUH ...!
NF!
UHN!

...!
GH!
NGH ...!

WAAAAAAAHHHHH
WAAAAAAAAAAHHHH!

I'M SORRY, MEGUMI...

...BUT IT'S ABOUT BEING A CREATOR.

WAAAAAAAAHHHHHH!

KATOU JUST STAYED THERE BY MY SIDE...

...TO THE VERY, VERY, VERY END...

AAAAAAAAHHHHHHHH!

...UNTIL I FOUND THE STRENGTH TO WALK ON MY OWN.

SHE STAYED WITH ME AS I STOOD THERE PARALYZED.

AWHHH... UHHRR...

.....
...AND IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU.
YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND IT...

YOU GAVE HER A DIRTY JOB.
WHY DID YOU FOIST IT ONTO KASUMIGAOKA-SENPAI?
ALSO...
...WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL AKI-KUN YOURSELF?
HE WORKED SUPER HARD ON IT BECAUSE HE WANTED YOU TO JOIN US TOO, ERIRI.
ZUKI (ZING)
AKI-KUN WORKED HARD ON THE PROPOSAL FOR THE NEXT PROJECT.

M—
MEGU-MI...
...BUT YOU DECIDED TO QUIT ANYWAY.
YOU KNEW HE WOULD BE SAD...

TOMOYA WAS SUFFERING, BUT YOU NEVER TRIED TO HELP HIM.
YOU DIDN'T COME BACK TO THE CIRCLE FOR AGES YOUR-SELF.

...I DIDN'T WANT TO SEE TOMOYA SAD...!
...
JUST...
...IT'S JUST ...
W—
WELL ...

SEE!?
YEAH, THAT WAS WRONG OF ME.
...I'M SORRY.

I'M NOT QUITTING THE CIRCLE!
BUT I WON'T DO IT AGAIN!

YOU'RE REALLY... GOING TO LEAVE US...?
IS IT RIGHT TO DO THAT...?

ARE YOU... REALLY SURE, ERIRI?
UM ....

SORRY. I'M SORRY... I COME INTO YOUR HOUSE AND...

I'M... ... SORRY ...!

BUT... BUT...!

I KEEP THINKING SOME-THING'S OFF...!

MEGUMI .....

THAT IT'S KIND OF...

GU (RRG)

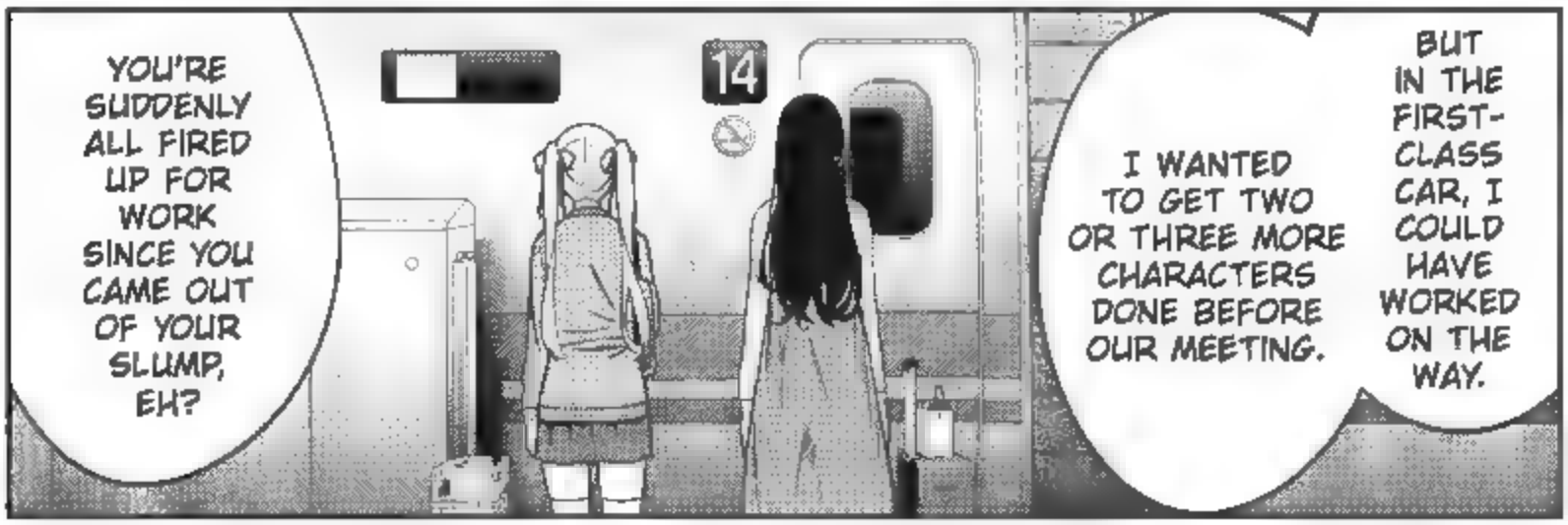
...TOTALLY WRONG!

.....

TOKYO STATION, APRIL

WHAT KIND OF A JOKE CONTRACTOR MEETS A CLIENT FOR THE FIRST TIME AND CLAIMS FIRST-CLASS SEATS AS AN EXPENSE OUT OF THE BLUE?

HEY, UTAHA KASUMIGAOKA, WHY DIDN'T WE BUY FIRST-CLASS SEATS?



Thank you for waiting. Doors for the Nozomi No. XXX bound for Hakata will be opening momentarily.

R-RINRI-KUN?

!?

PHEW! I CAUGHT YOU IN TIME!

ERIRI! UTAHA-SENPAI!

TA (THUD) タッ

TA タッ

TA タッ

AH! I FOUND YOU!

OKAY, LET'S GO, SAWAMURA-SAN.

14

!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

T-T-TO-TOMO...

THIS HERE'S TO○○○ BANANA AND GOMA TAMA○○! ONE FOR EACH OF YOU! TO EAT ON THE SHINKANSEN!

BUT YOU STILL HAVEN'T FORGIVEN US, HAVE YOU?

SHE SENT ME A TEXT YESTERDAY SAYING THEY WERE GOING TO OSAKA TO MEET THEIR BOSSES FOR THE FIRST TIME AND TOLD ME THE SHINKANSEN TIME AND SEATS ALONG WITH A VERY SINCERE APOLOGY.

ACTUALLY, MACHIDA-SAN TOLD ME YOU WOULD BE HERE...

YOU BOTH MADE THE RIGHT DECISION.
THE MORE I THOUGHT ABOUT IT, THE MORE I UNDERSTOOD...
I WAS JUST FEELING DOWN FOR A WHILE.
YOU HAVE MY SUPPORT ...
I'LL RECOMMEND YOU ON MY BLOG, SPREAD THE WORD TO MY FRIENDS, AND BUY ENOUGH COPIES TO GET EVERY PIECE OF BONUS MERCH AT EACH SHOP.
WITH YOU TWO WORKING ON IT, YOU CAN DEFINITELY MAKE AN AWESOME GAME!
I MEAN, IT'S AMAZING! YOU'RE GOING TO BE WORKING ON A MAJOR TITLE!

YOU WANT TO DO IT, DON'T YOU? YOU WANT TO BE A SUCCESS, YEAH? YOU WANT TO BECOME AN AWESOME ILLUSTRATOR, RIGHT?

TOMOYA, TOMOYA... TOMO-YAAA.....!

SO GIVE IT YOUR ALL, ERIRI!

DON (BUMP)

TO-MOYA ...!

BA (WHAP)

YES! I WILL...!

WE'LL MAKE YOU CRY... UTAHA KASUMI-GAOKA AND I BOTH!

THEN DO IT...!

JUST LIKE YOU PROMISED ME, MAKE ME PROUD OF YOU!

MAKE ME BOAST THAT I'M A CHILDHOOD FRIEND OF ERI KASHIWAGI!

OF COURSE! YOU WATCH OUT FOR THIS YEAR'S WINTER COMIKET!

?

BECOME A CREATOR WHO I CAN BOAST ABOUT TO EVERY-ONE!

SO YOU... TOMO-YA, YOU...

...YOU BE SOME-THING TO ME TOO.

DON'T LET THAT MONSTER EAT YOU ALIVE, OKAY?

HCHR! WHUH THUH HUH DUHN, UHUHUH KUSUMMU-GUOKUH!?*

SURE. LEAVE HER TO ME.

* HEY! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING, UTAHA KASUMIGAOKA!?

UTAHA-SENPAI ...

PON (PAT?)

PON

...TAKE GOOD CARE OF HER, OKAY?

YOU WORK HARD ON YOUR NEW PROJECT TOO.

I WILL... IT'LL BE LEGENDARY THIS TIME FOR SURE.

I'LL MAKE THE CIRCLE BIGGER AND BIGGER UNTIL, ONE DAY, I HIRE YOU TWO AGAIN!

I WILL TAKE YOU BACK!

...WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE TALKING TO!?

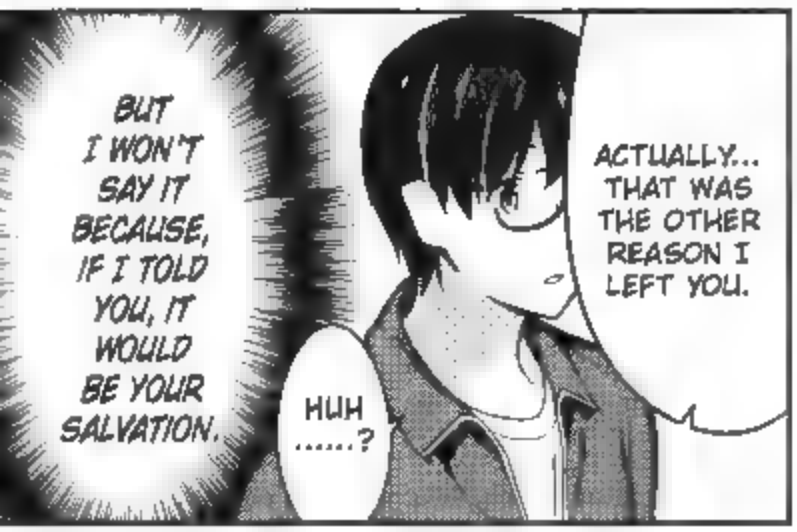
HMPH!

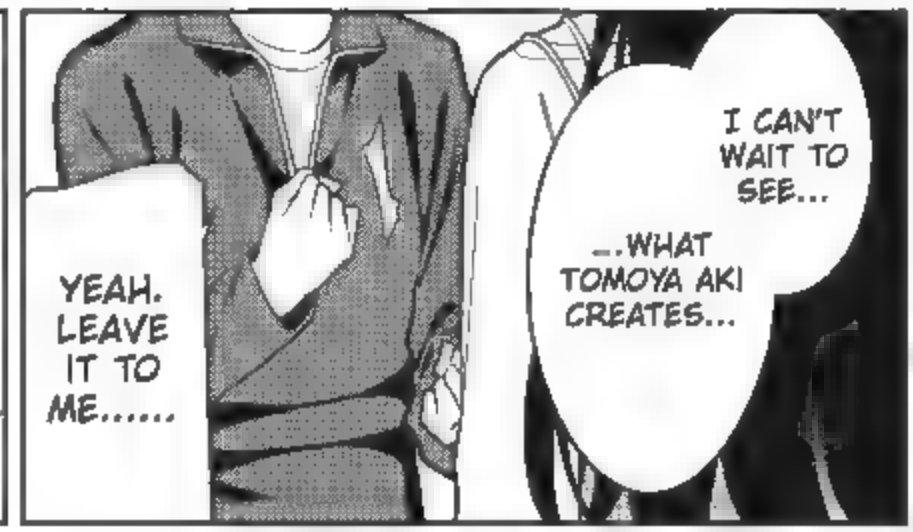
...YEAH, I KNOW.

UTAKO KASUMI AND ERI KASHIWAGI? THEY CAN'T BE BEAT!

YES. I'LL BE WAITING...

I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU!





UTAHA-SENPAI ...

EXCEED MY EXPECTA-TIONS.

...MEET MY EXPEC-TATIONS, OKAY?

...NO—

SO, TOMOYA-KUN...

I WANTED TO SEE A WORK OF YOU'VE MADE WITH NO ONE TO DEPEND ON.

ONE WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND SOUL.

OKAY. GOOD LUCK TO BOTH OF YOU!

WE'LL BE OFF, THEN, TOMOYA-KUN.

Thank you for waiting. The Nozomi No. HXH bound for Hakata will be departing momentarily.

AND AKANE KOUSAKA ...

...VS. ME.

14

THEM VS. AKANE KOUSAKA.

IT'S A FIGHT ...

ME VS. THEM.

I'M UP AGAINST AN ENEMY THAT'S FAR BEYOND MY LEVEL.

BUT I...

...WILL TAKE ON ANY FOE, NO MATTER HOW POWER-FUL.

...CAN I...HAVE THESE?

TO-MOYA...

YES, I KNOW... THAT'S WHY I WANT THEM.

BUT THOSE ARE...

YOU DON'T MIND... DO YOU?

ERIRI ...?

BOYA (BLURR)

GO AHEAD ...

I'LL APOLOGIZE TO KATOU LATER.

THANKS ...

FUWA (SWISH)

I...!

I...!

TO-MOYA ...

I'LL KILL YOU! I'LL MURDER YOU, YOU —!
BUT YOU SHOULDN'T, SINCE YOU'RE GOING TO THE SAME SCHOOL AGAIN THIS YEAR! THINK HOW EMBARRASSED YOU'D BE IN THE HALLS—YOU WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO LOOK AT EACH OTHER!
WH-WH-WH-WHAT THE HELL DID YOU JUST DO!? I-I WAS JUST ABOUT TO —!
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE SAYING GOOD-BYE HERE, BUT HERE YOU ARE, STILL TRYING TO KEEP ME BOUND! OKAY, FINE, I GET IT! I'LL REMAIN YOUR PET FOREVER!
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT!?
RINRI-KUN, RINRI-KUN...! NO...FROM NOW ON, YOU ARE MR. IMMORAL—FURINRI-KUN!

THE THREE OF THEM SPENT THE TIME UNTIL THE NEXT SHINKANSEN ARRIVED IN A VERY AWKWARD SILENCE.

POTSUN (PUHH)

WHERE'D IT GO?

THE SHINKAN-SEN...?

C'MON, YOU TWO! IF YOU START FIGHTING NOW, YOU'LL MISS THE SHINKA—

HUH?

AND THEN, THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR STARTED.

YOU CAN'T UNDER-STAND HOW I FEEL RIGHT NOW, TOKI...

LEAVE ME ALONE ...

GAAAHH! DON'T SAY THAAAAT!

WELL, YOU TALKED SO BIG ABOUT HOW YOU WERE GOING TO TRANSFER TO TOYOGASAKI, BUT THEN YOU DIDN'T STUDY AT ALL. IT'S YOUR OWN FAULT, MICCHI.

MICCHI ...

...YOU'VE LOOKED IRRITATED SINCE THE OPENING CEREMONY. IT'S A REAL BUMMER.

AAAHHH! NOT YOU TOO, TOKI!!!!!!

WORK IT OUT YOURSELF, YOU BOY-LOCO VOCALIST!

HOW SHOULD I KNOW?

WHAT!? WH-WHAT DO I DO?

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO!?

SHE MIGHT EVEN QUIT ICY TAIL.

SHE SAYS YOU GAVE UP YOUR GIRLFRIENDS TO CHASE THAT BOY.

RANKO WAS PRETTY ANGRY ABOUT THAT, YOU KNOW?

DOES IT REALLY NOT SUIT ME?

SARA (SWISH)

MEANWHILE, AT TOYOGASAKI ACADEMY—

IF YOU LIKED THE OLD STYLE, MAYBE YOU JUST NEED TO BE PATIENT AND WAIT.

WELL, IN A YEAR, IT'LL GROW BACK.

NO, IT'S NOT THAT IT DOESN'T SUIT YOU, BUT...

HUH...?

SHE WANTS ME TO WAIT FOR IT?

MEANING WE'LL STILL HAVE A RELATION-SHIP LIKE THIS A YEAR FROM NOW...?

...SENPAI?

TOMOYA-SENPAI?

HUH?

IZUMI...

...SAN?

...CHAN?

LONG TIME NO SEE, YOU TWO!

BISHI (WHAP)

ウリ

UNFORTU-NATELY, SHE HAS AN EXAM FOR A TOKYO HIGH SCHOOL.

I NEVER SAID SHE ACTUALLY TOOK IT.

I INTEND TO MAKE IZUMI'S DREAMS COME AS TRUE AS POSSIBLE.

TAKE GOOD CARE OF HER, THEN!

AH...!

HUH? OH, THAT WAS A FALLBACK. SINCE I GOT INTO TOYOGA-SAKI, I NEVER BOTHERED WITH THE TOKYO EXAM.

WH-WHA...? WHY? I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO A TOKYO SCHOOL.

AKI-KUN?

?

TO-MOYA-SEN-PAI...?

THAT S.O.B.!

...HEH!

...AND THE SAKURA PETALS DRIFTING DOWN...

IN THE SCHOOL YARD, WITH THE SPRING SUNLIGHT DANCING ABOUT...

RIGHT!

LET'S WORK HARD TOGETHER NOW!

CON-GRATS ON GETTING IN, IZUMI-CHAN.

...ONCE AGAIN, WE BEGIN TO RUN TOWARD A NEW HISTORY ...

Sketch Book

...AND A NEW LEGEND.

THE END